Mr C W Van Patten

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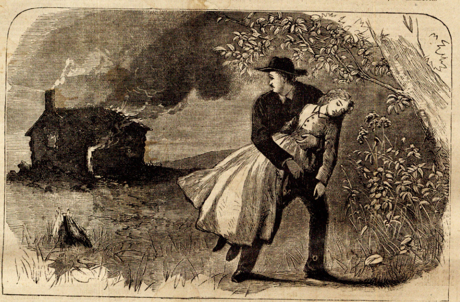

ALLIE AMES TAKEN PRISONER BY WALL UNDERBEE.

A MISTAKE.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

"What are you aiming, Joe, to see,
Scanning each hat and feather?"
"An azure wing and white aigrette
That clasps my willing tether.

"Somebody wears it on her hat—
The dainty hat, I know it—
It seems as though the bonny face
Looks bonnier below it.

"Along the rows of concert seats
I look until I find it,
And then—" "What then?" "Oh, then I try
To take a seat behind it.

"The wary hunter's practiced eye
Is not more keen or truer
For flitting wings, than mine has grown
Since first I longed to woo her.

"Ah, there it is! I see it now;
I know the azure shining,
The loops, and cunning vail of lace
About her small head twining.

"Good-bye, good-bye;" and Joe had gone.

* * * *

"Ah, Joe! how fares the feather?"
"Ask never, 'an you love me, Hal;'
I blundered altogether.

"I sat quite patiently a while,
Then love I could not smother,
And so I bent to whisper low.
Alas! it was her mother!

"Since then I put no trust in wings,
Nor hats of any fashion;
But evermore I'll see the face
Ere I declare my passion."

THE FIRE SPREADERS;

OR,

The Burners of Chicago.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," "MARK HEBER'S LUCK," "THE PLOT AGAINST HAWLEY," ETC.

CHAPTER III.

BLOTTED OUT OF EXISTENCE.

Beside Wall Underbee, as he crouched in the edge of the forest, waiting and watching for the destruction of Mrs. Withers' cabin, could have been detected a second grim figure—that of his confederate, Tripler Shott.

"You've really touched it off, then?" asked the latter, regarding the glow which had begun to flare out upon the night.

"Yes," replied Underbee, in the same guarded tone. "There is no other way of getting at the girl without a grand uproar. I can't break the doors down readily, for they were made when doors were more useful than ornamental. Besides, I have an idea."

"I think I can guess what it is."

"Perhaps you can," assented Underbee. "If the old woman should burn up in the cabin, there'd be no witness left as to what becomes of the girl."

"You're sure there are no men folks about the place?"

"Perfectly. This is the same old Mrs. Withers whose husband left her a dozen years ago, and she's never seen a sign of him since. She has always lived quite alone here, with the exception of the girl. The only danger we have to apprehend is from the girl's lover."

"She has a lover, then—already?"

"Yes. He's that Paul Sidney who has charge of Palmer's mill."

"Is he? Then the deuce take him! I hate that fellow worse than poison. He caused me to be turned away from the mill last winter."

"Good. This is another bond between you and me, Tripler. Paul Sidney caused me to be turned away from the mill before you worked there. And now he has again crossed my path. He has long been hanging around this place, and was here last evening. Possibly he may be near us at this minute, and this is why I had you come with me. You have your revolver?"

"Yes, and a good bear carver to back it, and I sha'n't hesitate to use them on Paul Sidney, at the least provocation."

The flames were now bursting through the roof of the lean-to, and beginning to lap the wall and roof of the cabin.

"We shall have to wake them up, if they don't start soon," muttered Underbee under his breath. "I would prefer—"

A wild scream suddenly rang out upon the still air of the night, and the rear door of the cabin was thrown open.

"That's the girl," whispered Underbee.

The scream was repeated, and hasty movements were heard within the cabin.

Then the voice of Allie Ames was heard calming the old woman, whose moans and groans came out on the stillness.

"It's all right," commented Underbee, with a savage chuckle. "The prize is ours. We've only to wait."

Even as he spoke, the front door of the cabin—in view of which the couple had posted themselves—was thrown open, and the next instant Allie Ames, who had slipped on her dress, came staggering out into the yard, bearing Mrs. Withers in her arms. By the exercise of the strength lent her young frame by the wild excitement of the moment, Allie speedily transferred her trembling burden to a place of safety.

For a few moments the old woman, who was in her nightgown, was speechless with terror and bewilderment, but she soon panted:

"Oh, my clothes!"

Allie sprang into the house, and soon reappeared with the clothes Mrs. Withers had laid off before retiring, and with also a couple of blankets she had hastily but thoughtfully dragged from the old woman's bed.

"Oh, my money! my money!" then groaned Mrs. Withers, tossing her arms into the air, and dancing about in the wildest excitement and desolation.

"Your money, Auntie?" repeated Allie, hovering near her.

"Yes, child—a hundred and fifty dollars, about which I haven't said anything to you. It's in that cracked yellow tea-pot in the pantry; all we have in the world—"

She paused, gasping for breath; but Allie was already on her way to the rescue of the money.

"Glorious!" was the single word that fell from the lips of Wall Underbee, as he noticed this return.

Springing erect, a few swift bounds brought him to the rear door of the cabin, which Allie, in the first moments of the bewilderment of being awakened by the fire, had thrown open.

As he reached it, Allie stood just within the door of the little pantry, and was in the act of seizing the cracked tea-pot containing the old woman's horde.

Her back was toward the intruder.

With two more swift bounds he was upon her.

To clasp a hand over her mouth—to seize her lithe figure as in a vice—was the work of a single moment; to lift her from her feet and carry her out in utter silence—although not without a struggle—was the work of another.

Mrs. Withers being at the front of the house, the intruder had no difficulty in reaching the cover of the woods unseen.

Shott at once joined him.

"Give me a hand," said Underbee, still maintaining his pressure upon the girl's mouth and figure. "Seize her hands and arms, and help me carry her down into the hollow. We'll break her neck sooner than let her utter the least cry."

Shott seized the struggling victim to the best possible advantage, and between her two assailants she was soon carried down into a lonely depression between two hills a quarter of a mile from the cabin.

"She's fainted, I think," said Shott.

"No; she's only playing 'possum. Take that strip of cloth we have brought for the purpose, and tie it over her mouth securely."

This order was at once executed, despite a fierce renewal of the struggle on the part of the captive.

"And now tie her hands behind her," commanded Underbee. "She seems determined to drive us to the last extremities."

The resistance of Allie was indeed carried to the utmost extent, but it availed her little eventually. Her feeble strength was no match for that of the two stout ruffians acting in concert, and she was soon pushed back against a tree, so securely tied and muffled as to be unable to move or speak.

"Keep watch over her a moment," resumed Underbee. "I'll take another look at the old woman!"

He slipped away cautiously in the direction of the burning cabin, the flames of which were now cast strongly into the zenith, but was not absent from his confederate more than ten minutes. He came back rubbing his hands and chuckling.

"Nothing could be better," he reported, in a voice that vibrated with an infernal joy. "The walls and roof have fallen in. Not a soul has come to the rescue. And the old woman seems more dead than alive, rocking herself to and fro upon the ground and calling the girl, whom she supposes to be burning in the midst of the flames."

"It is indeed well done," commented Shott. "That return for the old woman's savings was as fortunate for you as if you had planned it."

"Is it not glorious? From this hour no one except us will know that this interesting young lady is an inhabitant of our planet. She's more dead to the world than a woman in a coffin, for a woman in a coffin may be found, but she never will be—at least not until her name has been changed to Underbee by due process of law, a year or two hence."

"Bravo! Your plans will spite Paul Sidney, I see, and for that reason I am doubly glad to assist you. What's our next step?"

"To take a little brandy, I think, and to rest a few minutes. I'm all in a lather."

Throwing himself upon the ground near his victim, Underbee produced a flask of brandy and took a large drink. His companion did likewise, and then they resumed their expressions of joy and the discussion of their purposes.

"It's only a quarter of a mile to the spot where our horse and wagon is waiting," said Shott. "But I'm not sorry the distance is no greater. She's a solid little piece of feminity, and if we have to carry her—"

"Oh, we'll make her walk," interrupted Underbee complacently. "She's showed so much strength in fighting us, that she can't expect us to favor her."

A few minutes were devoted by Underbee to the necessary recuperation of his forces, and then the two villains resumed their retreat, each of them walking close beside the captive and maintaining a firm hold upon her.

In this way they soon reached a lonely path in which a horse and wagon were awaiting them.

"Lift her in," enjoined Underbee.

This being done, the couple sprang into the wagon, after unhitching the horse, and in another moment were driving leisurely in the direction of the handsome residence they had purchased, as related, with their ill-gotten booty.

"A grand success," muttered Shott.

"Yes—coming as it does at the heels of all those other successes."

About two hours were consumed in following this lonely road, the most of the time at a walk, and then an increased animation on the part of the two men announced that they were near their destination.

A few minutes thereafter they arrived at their head-quarters.

"This is the place, sure enough," said Shott, as he leaped from the wagon. "Your head is a little better than mine, Wall. After all these crooks and turns in the darkness, I was a little uncertain of my whereabouts."

"So much the better. Her ladyship will not know which way to go, if by any possibility she should make her escape."

"Oh, but the little beauty must be too well guarded to leave us."

"She *shall* be. This is just the place for her."

They assisted the captive to descend from the wagon. She shuddered visibly as she looked up at the silent house beside her.

"Perhaps she's cold," said Shott. "There's a chill in this night air, if 'tis September."

"I'll see to her," returned Underbee. "She can have brandy, or food, or anything she wants, if she will only be reasonable. Take the horse to the barn, Tripler. When you come into the house, we shall be in the kitchen."

He drew Allie toward the house while speaking, and Shott led the horse toward a barn whose outlines were just visible a hundred yards in the rear of the dwelling.

"Have no fear of either of us, Miss Ames," said Underbee, as he assisted, or rather dragged his captive toward the rear entrance of the house. "Tripler is a good boy, as I am, and will not harm you. He's merely helping me in this little matter, because I am going to help him in any similar affair at any time he may need my services. No harm will come to you—not the least, so long as you are reasonable."

Ascending the kitchen steps, he drew a key from his pocket, unlocked the door and pushed it open.

"Walk in, Miss Ames," said he, "and accept a thousand welcomes to the home of which you are destined to be the future mistress."

As resistance would have been alike foolish and fruitless, the captive complied with the invitation, or injunction, and the door was closed and locked behind her.

"Take a seat," added Underbee, advancing a chair. "I'll light a candle."

The candle lighted, he seated himself in front of his captive, and continued:

"I apologize, of course, for having bound that scarf over your mouth. It was necessary to prevent you from making any outcry. I apologize, too, for all the violence to which you have been subjected. My excuse is twofold: first, my love for you, and in the second place, the treatment I have received from Paul Sidney. It is hardly necessary for me to add that I wish to treat you with a kindness worthy of my affection, and I now hasten to remove these bonds from your hands, and this impediment to your speech."

He lost no time in giving the girl her immediate personal freedom.

"You realize, of course," he resumed, as he again seated himself, "that you are not to scream for help, and that you are not to make any attempt to escape."

"Of course—until screaming or attempts at escape are likely to be of some use," panted Allie, whose breathing had for the last half hour been seriously impeded. "I shall simply do the best I can for myself here—as I have always done everywhere."

A few moments Underbee looked into her clear eyes, endeavoring to terrorize her soul through them; but in this effort he was unsuccessful. She not only met his gaze unflinchingly, but there was such hearty scorn and defiance expressed upon her features and in her manner that he experienced a visible annoyance.

"This house is mine," he said abruptly, "and in this country, as in every other, a man's house is his castle. No one has a right to enter it—no one can enter it against my good will and pleasure. It was formerly the property of a famous counterfeiter, who came up here into the woods and organized a private manufactory of postal currency. He was never detected at the business, but he died suddenly, and his heirs and assigns lacking pluck to continue his industry, they made way with all the materials and implements, sold the place at low figures, and disappeared from this section of the country. The house has since changed hands two or three times, and has finally fallen into mine. The only relic of its former owner and occupant is a large secret vault at one side of the cellar—"

"A vault?" repeated Allie.

"A perfect dungeon, in fact, in which the famous counterfeiter carried on his printing. It is a place so cleverly contrived that you may even enter the cellar without seeing it, and so strong that an army of men would be required a whole day to break into it with pickaxes and sledge-hammers."

"Well, sir?"

"Well, my dear young lady, this vault is destined to be your residence until you give me a favorable answer to my oft-repeated proposal of marriage! I shall supply you with food, with clothing, with a bed, with a fire, and a light even, if the cold and the darkness should be unpleasant, but in this vault you will remain until you consent to become my wife!"

"Let me beg of you then, Mr. Underbee, to make the place as comfortable as you can, for it is evidently to be my home for an interminable period," replied Allie quietly. "Have you any other woman here?"

"How any other woman?"

"Why, any sister, mother, servant-girl, housekeeper, or what not?"

"No, nothing of the kind. Shott and I have only just taken possession. I bought the house already furnished."

"Well, who is going to cook for me and wash the dishes? Am I to wait on myself? Am I to be the only woman on the premises?"

Underbee nodded, in a sort of dumb stupor.

"Well, it's a bargain. If you'll supply me with all the materials for keeping house comfortably, I'll not only cook and wash for myself, but I'll cook and wash for you and Mr. Shott, until Mr. Shott's condition can be expressed by one t less than his name contains, and until your name is changed by stern realities from Underbee to Underkey."

An oath broke from the incendiary.

"I'll be cursed if she isn't mocking me!" he growled, as a profuse sweat broke out upon his forehead.

"No; I'm merely debating with you the various points of housekeeping. I think—"

"And I think you'll have to cool off a while in the vault of the famous counterfeiter," interrupted Underbee, as he arose. "You don't seem to realize into whose hands you have fallen. You don't seem to have any idea where you are. You forget that old Mrs. Withers believes you to be dead, and that she will soon convey her conviction to all your friends, and especially to Paul Sidney."

At the realization of this fact Allie started violently. Her face even lost a portion of its color.

"Ah! you begin to see how the case stands!" cried Underbee jubilantly. "The least reflection will tell you that you are virtually out of the world, inasmuch as you are supposed to have been consumed with the cabin. No search will be made for you. Even Paul Sidney will mourn you as dead. And dead you are at this moment, to all intents and purposes, so far as all the world around us is concerned. You are blotted out of existence—as much so as if you were in your grave—and you can never live again, never come forth into the world again, except as the wife of your devoted admirer. Of course I do not expect you to marry me at present. You are only a little girl yet. Besides, I have lots of business on hand for the next few months. But a year hence, or a couple of years, you will become Mrs. Wall Underbee, and I shall have your solemn promise to this effect before you set foot outside of this house."

For a moment the brave equanimity of Allie Ames was shaken by this terrible picture of her situation.

"I will only reply to all this now," she then said, "by declaring to you that I shall never be your wife, Wall Underbee. I will die first!"

"You'll change your mind after you hear all my plans for your future—after you learn how truly I adore you—and especially after you have taken a good look at the vault of the famous counterfeiter."

"Let's look at that vault now then, since you think so much of it," proposed Allie.

"Very well, we'll look at it. I'll first admit Shott, whom I hear coming."

Shott was admitted, and the door duly secured behind him, and then Underbee seized the light and moved toward the door leading to the cellar.

"This way, Miss Ames," he said, as he threw open the door, disclosing a long flight of stairs which led down into an abyss of darkness whose limits were not perceptible.

The captive heaved a sigh, but no other token of her misery escaped her, as she descended the stairs between the incendiaries—Underbee leading the way, and Shott following close behind her.

CHAPTER IV.

A MYSTERIOUS KEY.

The remainder of the night wore away at last, and a new day dawned—another of these sultry days for which the season had been distinguished.

With the coming of the morn, Mrs. Withers could have been seen sitting upon the ground near the smoking ruins of her cabin, to which spot she had crawled to look for some trace of Allie, and at which she had subsequently remained for warmth.

The poor woman was wild and haggard—almost insane with her grief.

She had long since wept all her tears away, and had long since ceased her wild cries of despair. The dire distresses of her soul no longer found voice in words, nor did she endeavor by the use of her weak voice to summon sympathy or assistance.

Bowed, broken-hearted, and all alone under the shadows of the great forest, and under the expiring heat of the embers of her home, sat the poor old creature, a saddening picture of despair and desolation, as well as of the most abject helplessness.

It would have required a second glance to tell whether she were living or dead, she remained so quiet and motionless.

The bright sun continued to rise higher and higher, dissipating the shadows under the great forests, but the poor sufferer took no note of anything around her, all the senses of her being appearing to be absorbed in the loss she had sustained in losing Allie.

She was seated there, in that attitude of misery and suffering, when a man came briskly up the lonely road that led past the cabin.

This man seemed to be a little uncertain as to his whereabouts, but at the same time to have the greatest possible interest in knowing where he was, for he was continually casting sharp glances in every direction, and he even came to a halt repeatedly, the better to observe the woods and hills and other objects around him.

"Must be somewhere along here," he suddenly ejaculated. "Can't be mistaken."

He was evidently a sailor. He not only wore the roundabout coat and the tarpaulin hat which sailors usually wear, but his features had that deep bronze which can be acquired only by a long exposure to the breezes and beams by which the dominion of Neptune is distinguished.

"I'll stake my life on't!" he added, still looking around him. "Must be hereabouts."

The age of this man would have been a puzzle to the eye most practiced in such problems. He might have been a few years older or a few years younger, but he had evidently passed his prime, whether the fact was owing to the mere flight of years or to those rough experiences which so often enter into a sailor's lot. He was short and thin of stature—undersized in every way. His features were especially weazeny. But there was a keenness in his eyes, no less than a vigor in his movements, which attested that he was still full of life.

"There have been great changes hereabouts, of course, during all these fourteen years," he soliloquized, continuing to look around him searchingly. "Many of the woods have been cut down, and, on the other hand, many of the farms and clearings seem to have been deserted and left to be overrun with brush and saplings. But here is certainly about the spot where the old cabin stood."

The interest he had all along exhibited now grew suddenly to an excitement, under the influence of which he quickened his steps.

"Ah! there is the place," he ejaculated, a few moments later. "There's the smoke of the very cabin I'm in search of! Must be washing day. The old woman must have a fire out of doors, and— Good Heavens!"

The concluding ejaculation was caused by the spectacle which now burst upon the gaze of the stranger—the spectacle of the gaping little cellar, and of the smoking embers scattered in and around it.

The new-comer halted a moment in wondering astonishment.

"The house has been burnt during the night!" he exclaimed, turning off from the road and entering the yard. "I see! I see! This is another of those fires which are consuming the whole country."

At the sound of his voice, Mrs. Withers started from her wrapt and bitter reverie, and turned her gaze upon him.

"What's this?" he resumed, as his eyes encountered the bowed and trembling figure near the cellar. "Somebody in trouble?"

At first view of him Mrs. Withers had only seemed to realize that somebody was there; but as he came nearer—as his voice resounded louder on account of that increased proximity—she started violently, and gathered herself feebly to her feet, turning her gaze full and searchingly upon him.

"Jack Withers!" she gasped.

"Good Heavens! the old woman!" was the corresponding recognition.

It was thus that a husband and wife encountered each other after fourteen years of the former's absence.

"Well, yes, it's that same Jack, old woman," added the new-comer, after recoiling several steps in astonishment. "And this is really you, Jerushy?"

He approached and extended his hand, but Mrs. Withers did not seem to see it.

"You're welcome to come, Jack Withers, as you was welcome to go," said she sternly, as she pursed up her thin lips, and resumed her seat on the ground, "but there's no use of wasting even a shake of hands between us. A man who'll desert his wife, and never write her a line or send her a dollar in fourteen years, isn't deserving of the least consideration from anybody."

Having given this expression to her offended dignity, Mrs. Withers burst into a flood of tears that were painful to witness.

"Don't reproach me, Jerushy," said Withers, advancing nearer and looking down into the smoking cellar. "I have been a very wicked man all these years, it is true, but you cannot add anything to the reproaches I am daily and hourly receiving from my own conscience. And you—you are greatly changed, I see. You've had a hard time in my absence. And just now you are in the greatest affliction."

At this reminder of her situation, Mrs. Withers sobbed and moaned louder than ever, rocking herself to and fro.

"How has all this come about?" continued Withers huskily, as his eyes wandered searchingly in every direction around him.

It was several minutes before Mrs. Withers could so far control her wild grief as to answer the question.

"As you see," she then said, "the cabin has burned down under my eyes."

"And the girl—where is the girl?" demanded Withers more and more huskily.

The flood of grief evoked by this question struck a profound terror to the soul of the questioner. A sudden pallor showed itself through the deep bronze of his complexion.

"Where is she?" he repeated, after a few moments of wondering dread. "Where is the girl, Jerushy? Speak!"

Mrs. Withers finally controlled her emotions sufficiently to admit of her pointing into the depths of the cellar.

At this intimation, the excitement of Jack Withers became nearly as great as her own. He clung for support to the charred stump of an apple-tree which had stood near the door.

"No—no!" he gasped, shuddering. "It can't be! You don't mean it!"

"It's true, Jack," affirmed Mrs. Withers solemnly, now finding her voice. "Allie was awakened by the rush and the roar of the flames so near her. She uttered a scream which waked me up. She slipped on her dress and came to my assistance. I was too scared to move—I should have been burned in my bed but for that child's courage. She carried me out in her arms and brought me my clothes. And then—and then— May heaven forgive me!"

"Go on!" said Withers hoarsely, still clinging to the charred stump.

"I sent her back for some money I had saved in a tea-pot in the pantry—"

The voice died away in horror.

"And—she did not come back?"

"No—she did not come back! The fire was too far gone. The floor must have been burned under her feet, or some timber must have fallen upon her. I must have fainted when I called and called and she didn't come back nor answer. The next thing I knew the whole building crumbled into a pile of brands in the cellar. And this was the end of my poor sweet Allie!"

A long silence followed.

Mrs. Withers continued to rock herself to and fro, now that the dread scene had been so painfully revived in her mind, and for a long time seemed utterly oblivious of the presence of her husband.

And he—it would be difficult to describe how terribly this brief report touched him. For several minutes, as he clung to his stump, it seemed as if the breath of life had left him.

"It is even so," he finally assured himself, in a whisper. "There's no mistake about it. The girl is certainly dead. Accursed fatality! Why couldn't I have come a day sooner? And this is the end of all my grand schemes about her!"

Quitting his stump at last, he paced back and forth with a face like that of a man in a trance.

"And what is to become of you, Jerushy, now that Allie is dead?" he finally asked, as he came back to the weeping woman. "I mean, what would have become of you, if I hadn't returned at just this moment?"

This question touched the dignity of the poor old creature, calling her thoughts from her grief, and she soon became calmer.

"I shall not suffer," she replied, arising to her feet again. "Allie and I had one good friend in the world—a young man named Paul Sidney, who is as dear to me as if he were my own son. Paul will be here in the course of the day, and he will not allow me to want for anything. I've only to look to him for everything I need."

Withers looked pained.

"Won't you allow me to help you?" he asked. "You will at least accept some money?"

"No, Jack—after what has passed."

"Is there nothing I can do for you?"

"Nothing."

"Won't you have a little brandy to keep up your strength until this Mr. Paul Sidney comes?"

"No, thank you. Stay—there is *one* thing you can do for me, if you will."

"You have only to name it."

"I would like you to tell me who Allie was, and who were her parents."

Withers heaved a deep sigh. His features became convulsed again.

"You told me, all these years ago," resumed Mrs. Withers, "that her real and true name was Allie Ames, that her father was a rich gentleman, and that her uncle and aunt—"

"Did I ever tell you any such thing as that, Jerushy?"

"You certainly did. I forced you to tell me. I gave you no peace—"

"I remember something about the matter. You pestered me a great deal about the girl's history, and I gave you more or less of the truth concerning her—"

"But not all, Jack?"

"No, not all. Her real name was Allie Ames, and she was the daughter of a wealthy gentleman of Chicago. But what is the use of speaking of these matters now that she is dead and gone? I had rather not say anything on the subject. Is there anything else in which I can oblige you?"

"Nothing."

"I will go, then. But we do not part in anger, I hope?"

"No, Jack," replied the long-deserted wife brokenly. "I've always wished you well—I wish you well now. I know not where you have been, nor do I care, except that I am sorry if you have suffered and been wretched. I shall not live long, nor do I wish to. It would be folly for you and me to attempt to be anything again to each other. I could have no faith in you, nor could I be of the least assistance to you. It is better for you to go away again; but my blessing shall go with you everywhere, in so far as you deserve it."

A minute later Jack Withers was walking up the road, somewhat dazed and much excited, and he did not once look back upon the bowed and helpless woman he had left by the ruins of her cabin.

"She's quite right," he mused, when he had become calmer. "I had no intention of settling down with her again of course, although I should be glad to atone for the past, if she would let me. And so the girl is dead? What a horrible pit has here yawned under my feet! How all my hopes have gone to ruins! I'm tempted to kill myself."

He halted upon a river bluff and looked down into the dark waters.

"I can never go back to Chicago, now that the girl is dead," he muttered. "I shall never dare meet Lawyer Raven! And yet I'm not prepared to die here, like a rat in a hole. Don't know what I will do. May as well move on for the present."

He went growling and cursing along that lonely road mile after mile, paying no attention to the lapse of time, or to anything around him.

But at length he grew tired and hungry, and suddenly became conscious of the fact.

"I must rest," he said, starting and looking around, "and I must have something to eat."

His inquiring glance soon rested upon a large, handsome dwelling, in a retired situation, but at no great distance.

"I can get a bite there, doubless," he mused, "and the sooner I get it the better."

He took his way to the dwelling in question, remarking, as he advanced, that there were no signs of life about it.

Giving no thought to this circumstance, however, he trudged on to the house and up the steps of the kitchen, upon the door of which he knocked loudly for admittance.

As no one opened to him, not even when his knock was thrice repeated, he came to the conclusion that the occupants of the house were temporarily absent.

"Somebody lives here, certain," he assured himself, as he pressed his face against one of the kitchen windows. "I see lots of chairs and tables and stoves, and all that sort of thing. Folks must be away. These fires all around the country are disturbing everything, and making even strange things perfectly simple. But the house being inhabited, it's perfectly clear that something eatable is to be had within, and if I can find any kind of an opening, I'm certain not to go away hungry."

Trying the nearest windows, he soon found one that would shove up from the bottom, and through the aperture thus afforded him he speedily crawled into the kitchen.

But scarcely had he thus invaded the kitchen of the mysterious dwelling, when a loud snoring fell upon his hearing, proceeding from an apartment immediately adjoining.

Stepping as noiselessly as possible toward the door of communication, which was ajar, Jack Withers peered in upon the sleeper.

"A desperate looking ruffian!" was his mental comment. "Isn't that a pistol under his head? And isn't that a monster key lying beside him?"

It *was* a monster key, as Jack almost instantly decided—a key much resembling the famous key of the Bastile, which is to be seen in forty or fifty different collections in Europe and America.

"And when a man of sense sees a key like that," mused Withers quickly, "he grabs it. It suggests a wine vault, a store-room, a what not—at the very least some good cider. I must have it!"

Dropping upon his hands and knees, he pushed the door of communication further ajar, and crept noiselessly into the apartment of the sleeper, whose snoring from this near point of contemplation was truly terrific.

To reach the key, seize it, and beat a retreat were all the labors of about six or seven seconds.

"And when a man of sense once gets hold of a key like this," said Jack to himself, as he held it up to a closer inspection, "he hastens to find a hole into which to put it—the lock, in fact, to which it belongs. Let's see," and his eyes wandered around again searchingly. "No use of going up stairs—no, nor of looking around upon this floor. A key like this can only belong down cellar—down in some vault, down in some cave of Aladdin. And so down cellar I go, and this very minute."

And with this Jack Withers crossed the floor of the kitchen, opened a door which gave upon a cellar, as he had suspected, lighted a candle which stood upon the mantelpiece, felt of a revolver he carried in his breast pocket, and then pressing the mysterious key to his breast, he began descending the cellar stairs with all possible dispatch and silence.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

ROMANCE OF TWO PICTURES.

BY MRS. AMELIA E. BARR.

I do not think that all the romance of life lingers around Fifth Avenue and Madison Square. If I was a betting man, I would take the chances on any of the quiet streets laying above Fourth, and west of Broadway. I think, too, I ought to know; for, as a wealthy bachelor about town, I have boarded and occupied rooms in almost every respectable locality, and "I am free to maintain" that the most fashionable streets are, by long odds, the dreariest places in the city.

Last winter I had a suit of rooms about a block from Broadway, and in one of the lowest numbered streets I have indicated. They were comfortably and handsomely furnished, and there was not a woman in the house—not that I object to women, if they are young and pretty; but that is not the usual style of landladies. So I put it down among the advantages of these rooms that the housekeeper was an Italian, polite, suave and silent in four languages.

As my income is derived chiefly from well-rented property, and I have no literary tastes that the daily newspapers do not satisfy, I often find myself with a good deal of spare time which I am willing to devote to other people's business or amusement. Luckily for me, a young Italian artist occupied rooms next to mine, and I soon fell into the habit of strolling into his studio, and passing the morning beside him. At this time he was copying in crayon two photographs that a celebrated house in town had sent him. The pictures were to be life size, and finished by a certain day, as they were to go by the steamer leaving immediately after it to Scotland. They were the heads of two girls, sisters evidently; both blondes, and both so perfectly beautiful that it was impossible for us to decide to which the golden apple ought to be given.

I watched the progress of these pictures with a kind of fascination, and we speculated and conversed as to the charming originals.

"Not Scotch girls," Cellini said; "theirs was no pale, unripened northern beauty. The fire and passion of southern life was in the faces of both."

"Nonsense," I replied. "Every handsome woman is not necessarily Latin by race and tropical in nature. Yankee girls, both of them. I'll bet twenty years' experience on it."

As they drew near completion, I got uneasy; I could not bear to think of losing them entirely; so I said:

"Cellini, you must make me a copy of those two heads. I am fond of pictures, and I'll pay you twice what ——— does."

After some hesitation he agreed.

"You know," I urged, "that to me they will be only fancy pictures. I shall call them Venus and Hebe."

So, though the pictures went away, new ones were put upon the easel; and every morning I brought my Havanas into Cellini's studio, and watched the progress of my goddesses. In the course of time they adorned my own walls, and many a pleasant hour I spent admiring them and speculating about their history and home.

As for poor Cellini, it was easy to see that he had conceived for the eldest, whom I had called "Venus," a very real passion; but as "Hebe" was my favorite, we did not disagree on this subject. Somehow these two sweet faces, with their bright innocent beauty, began to exercise a strange influence over both of us. So real had they become to us, that we involuntarily uncovered our heads when we came into their presence; and as for talking in my usual free-and-easy manner before them, I felt it to be impossible. My sitting-room became a little sanctuary, and my usual wine parties were henceforward given in a hotel. I did not of course mention the reason to any of my companions but Cellini, and his romantic and imaginative nature saw nothing either sentimental or ridiculous in it.

And thus the summer passed away. Both Cellini and I went out of town, yet not so far but that we frequently ran into the city to take a look at our guardian angels. I think I will let "guardian angels" stand, for I am sure the lovely characteristic face of my "Hebe," with its childlike purity and womanly decision, had wonderfully influenced me for good the last few months; while Cellini's love was that of a devotee for a saint, rather than the worship of a man for an earthly mistress.

We had scarcely got settled comfortably in our winter quarters when I received intelligence of the death of an uncle in Edinburgh, and certain provisions of his will rendered a visit to Scotland indispensable. The hope—vague and undefined indeed, but still present—of learning something of the beautiful sisters, made a voyage across the Atlantic at this season more endurable than it would otherwise have been.

The night before I was to leave, Cellini and I spent together in my room. The two sweet faces looked down on us as we smoked and talked, and I quite shrunk from the pain of separation. Cellini gave me the original photographs from which he had at first copied, and these, and the information that the bill had been made out to a Mrs. Napier, was all the clue I had.

Although Scotland is my native country, I did not intend staying a day longer than was warrantable, for to me there is only one city to live in—New York; it is, after all the fuss about the country, the best place in summer and the only place in winter. Still, I did not anticipate being back before Christmas; so I asked Cellini to put a sprig of holly above the pictures, and promised, all well, to be back in time to make my New-year's calls.

The Italian was kindly and sensitive as a woman, and I don't think it any shame to say that he wept on my shoulder that night, or that my own eyes, too, were wonderfully dim and misty. I could not help loving the fellow, utterly thriftless as he was, without an idea of the value of money, shamefully indifferent as to the fashion or quality of his coat, and particular about nothing on earth but the brand of his tobacco. Still I loved this man as I had never loved any man, or woman either, before. I made my agent collect his dues and pay such accounts as I knew were absolutely indispensable. I was proud of his genius, grateful for his love, and I trusted his simplicity and truthfulness with a confidence that kept my heart young and fresh. It was better than a sermon only to live by his side. Impurity of thought or speech was impossible in his presence; in his company, without one reproof or admonition, I had grown insensibly to hate my old life of dissipation and folly, and to become ambitious of something nobler and better. So you see I had good reasons for loving Cellini, and for sorrowing at our necessary separation.

After my arrival in Edinburgh I wrote out a list of all the "Napiers" in the directory, and then quietly made inquiries about them; but it was all futile, there was not a Miss Napier in the city that was not a libel on either of my pictures. I had made up my mind to return by the "Anchor Line," and for this purpose left Edinburgh for Glasgow about two weeks before Christmas, for I had friends in that city with whom I expected to stay a week before sailing for New York.

Two nights after my arrival I went with a small party to Glover's theatre, and the first person my eye fell upon was "Hebe." But O how wonderfully changed! All the bright childish look of mirth and careless happiness was gone; washed out, it seemed to me, with tears, for her eyes had a tender, wistful look, as if they were searching for sympathy and love.

"Who is she, Sinclair?" I said, to the friend at my side.

"I do not know, for I seldom leave my books 'for woman's looks;' but McNair will tell you;" and turning to a gay young officer behind, said, "McNair, who is that young lady before us, in the second box from the stage?"

"Miss Lily Napier," he answered promptly. "Where have you been, Sinclair, not to know the beautiful barbarian?"

"Barbarian!" I repeated indignantly.

"Well, yes. I don't know why not. She comes from the Comanche country, and they say she is breaking her heart to get back to the Texas prairies again."

"Very creditable in her," I replied. "Anything is better than this smoky, dirty place. A girl like that wants sunshine and freedom!"

"Well, poor thing! she gets little enough of either now. The old lady is very hard upon her, sister Flora says. Seems to me no one could be cross to such a little beauty."

Of course I procured an introduction, and you may be sure I made the most of my time. I never worked as hard to please a girl before, and for the very first time in my life I found myself honestly and desperately in love. I put off my voyage until I was ashamed to intrude any longer on my friends; besides, Cellini was urging my return by every post, in what I thought a very unreasonable manner. Before leaving Glasgow, however, I had so far gained her confidence as to be intrusted with a message to her mother and sister concerning her ill-treatment and her unhappiness. They were living at present in New York, and she gave me their address.

"You may have to go up two or three pairs of stairs, Mr. Lyell, for mamma is very poor. Do you think you can climb so high for me?"

I told her I "would go to the highest peak of the Alps to please her;" and she blushed, and said she "would not send me there, for fear I might not come down again."

"For fear I might not come down again." There was a shadow of hope in that, and you can't think how happy it made me.

I was to tell her mother to send for her immediately, at all risks, and to pay no attention to any letters that might apparently come from her, for they were all dictated by her grandmother, and were generally the very antipodes of her true feelings.

"I have found out, Mr. Lyell, that poverty is not the worst of all evils. Tell mamma I want to come home, and that I would not give 'shucks,' as we say in Texas"—and she laughed merrily—"for all grandmamma's thousands."

You may be sure I promised all she required. Holding her little hands, looking into her bright, pleading eyes, she might have asked, not the half, *but the whole* of my kingdom, and I would joyfully have laid it at her feet. I wanted to ask her to marry me, and let me carry her back home, but I was afraid. Can you understand me? I who had looked with suspicion on the smiles of the richest girls in New York—I who imagined I had nothing to do but choose and have—was actually afraid of this little penniless frontier girl, lest she should say "No" to me. Bidding her good-bye, I asked for permission to write.

"It would be to grandmamma. She would get the letter, of course."

So I was obliged to leave her without either promise or link of any kind between us. At our parting she gave me her mother's address. I was agreeably surprised to find it in the same street as my own rooms. All my anxiety was now to get back to New York. I thought continually of her suffering the most unnatural restraints, and pining for her home and friends, but I could do nothing for her release till I saw her mother.

Cellini was as happy as a child when we grasped each other's hands, and to tell the truth, I was as impatient as one could be to get into my room again and tell him my success. But before I got my travelling wraps off, he said joyfully:

"What do you think, Lyell? I have found 'Venus.'"

"And I 'Hebe.'"

"We are engaged."

"My dear Cellini, you have beat me. Who would have believed it?"

"Only in love. It is my nature. Forgive me."

I could hardly help hugging him.

"You beat me in everything that is good and noble, Cellini. If I had loved as purely and sincerely as you, she would have recognized it, and I should have felt no doubts and fears. I might have been happy to-day."

"You will be happy. See! she smiles on you."

I almost fancied she did. Then I told him all that had happened, and declared my intention of going to see Mrs. Napier that very night.

"It is well," he said. "I shall go in half an hour. I will introduce you."

He had always been good-tempered, but there was a repose and peace about him now that was almost grand.

"What *is* the matter with you, Cellini?" I said.

"I am satisfied. Life is complete. Claudia has perfected the circle of existence."

"Claudia is—?"

"My Venus. I found her soon after you left. I went to see Paola one morning, and he was giving her a music lesson. He introduced me. I went for my lesson every day she went for hers, until I obtained permission, one stormy afternoon, to take her home. She invited me to call, and lo! I am happy. We shall be married when I have saved money enough."

I laughed heartily.

"Do not laugh, Lyell. See!" and he took his pocket-book triumphantly out of his desk.

There really was quite a large sum in hiding there.

"I am grown industrious, you see, and," screwing up his face comically, "awful stingy."

I do not know what I had expected to find in Mrs. Napier, but I know that I was agreeably surprised. She was a very handsome woman of thirty-eight years of age, and every way satisfied all my demands for a mother-in-law. I found that her pen was her chief support, and that under her *nom de plume* she had long been a favorite writer of mine.

I do not think I ever spent happier evenings than I did at her house. There was always one or two nice people there, and I began to imagine myself quite literary by association, and to buy more books than ever I had done in my life.

Lily's return was of course the one idea, and the chief topic of all my conversation and hopes, but it was delayed until weeks lengthened into months and spring was fairly regnant. I knew it by the fresh bright toilets on Broadway, and my tailor's suggestions as to my own dress. But there had been great difficulty in inducing the old lady in Glasgow to resign Lily, and it was not thought wise to irritate her by a forcible or peremptory removal.

But just as summer was coming, and the town was beginning to thin, and there were nice prospects of long quiet evenings with the Napiers, and of moonlight rides in the Park, Lily came home. I went down to pier No. 20 with her mother and sister and Cellini to meet her, and I noticed how the captain and officers gathered round her, and how loth they were to part with her, and how she gave a parting word or smile to every sailor she passed on the steamer. Every one seemed to feel a little shadow at her departure. But I was in luck now; it was my turn to be in the sunshine, and I was determined to make it my right as soon as possible.

All summer I stayed in town because the Napiers did; and I must say I have the highest opinion of New York as a summer resort. I could get just as much fruit and ice as I wanted; I could have company when I desired it, and peace when I wished to be alone; and as for the heat, it is my opinion that New York is ten degrees cooler than any of the fashionable watering places.

During the summer Lily and I came to understand one another; and at its close Cellini and Claudia were married, and went to Italy for a couple of years. You see I was furnishing my house, and I needed so many more pictures than I had, that Cellini was able to realize quite a large sum of money. He had contracted a very good habit of working and saving, and Claudia was as practical and sensible as she was beautiful, and bid fair to keep him up to his new position, and to supply the commercial element which was lacking in her husband.

I hear a great deal about unhappy marriages, and the failure of the institution altogether to supply what it has done for ages, the highest form of peace and love to be found on earth, but I do not believe a word of it.

It is true, I am much changed since I married, but I think it is for the best, no matter what my old companions say.

I attend better to my business; I have raised all my rents and improved my property. I do not give any more wine parties, and I never go to a theatre unless the play is quite proper, and I can have Lily by my side.

My public parlors are full of fine pictures, but you won't see *the two crayon heads* among them. They adorn the walls of our private sitting-room, into which no stranger ever comes; for it seems to me out of all good taste to hang the faces of those you love where every indifferent person may look upon and criticise them.

As I write this, the bright innocent face I have loved from my first glimpse of it, looks down on me, and I know the sunshine of its smile brightens all the house and all my life; and as I hear the time-piece on the mantel chiming six o'clock, I know that very soon two light feet will trip down stairs, and two white arms will clasp my neck, and the dear face of my "Hebe" will nestle close to mine, and whisper, "Don't you know dinner is waiting for you, lazy darling?" And though that is a very prosaic ending to my story, it is one that stands a good many trials, and is, after all, a very solid and enjoyable close to a contented, happy day.

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ORDERLY ARRANGEMENT.

"How is it, Doctor," said a gentleman to the late Rev. Dr. Fuller, "that our people can remember the substance of your sermons better than those of any other man who preaches for us? Take my children, for instance:—If they hear you preach they can give me, when they get home, a pretty correct idea of the sermon, while the sermons of others, though they may be interested in them, they are not able to explain."

"I cannot tell," replied Mr. Fuller, "unless it be owing to my method of arrangement. I always pay particular attention to this part of composition. In my youth I used to help read proof in a printing-office, and among the correspondents of the publisher were two clergymen whose manuscripts I was called upon to read. One wrote a beautiful, clerkly hand, while the chirography of the other was very bad; and yet, when once started with the reading, I found the latter by far the easiest to follow. The man who wrote the beautiful hand was flowery and erratic, and the commencement of a sentence gave no clue to what its continuation might be; whereas, the man who wrote the bad hand expressed his thoughts so tersely and so connectedly, with reasoning so clear and so graphic, and, in short, with such unswerving order of arrangement, that, when I had once got fairly started with his manuscript, his seeming hieroglyphics became as plain as print. From this simple circumstance I took a hint which has given me guidance in the preparation of my sermons.

"For instance," explained the Doctor, "suppose I were to say to my servant,—'Betty, I want you to go to the store and buy some butter, and starch, and cream, and soap, and tea, and clothes-pins, and sugar, and blue, and cakes,'—Betty would be apt to declare that she could not possibly remember such a string of things. But suppose I were to put it in arrangement thus:—'Betty, you know your mistress is going to have friends to tea to-morrow, and that you are going to wash the day following. For the tea-party you will want tea, and sugar, and cream, and cakes, and butter; and for your washing you will want soap, and starch, and blue, and the clothes-pins.' Betty would be apt to hear this not only understandingly, but she would go away and purchase the articles without forgetting anything. The preacher who would be understood and remembered must place things together that belong together, and let his succession of ideas be natural and legitimate." C.

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—Grief is lessened by common endurance; joy and hope are sweeter by common enjoyment.

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—Keep good company, and be one of the number.

WIT AND HUMOR.

A Boston man who, in the goodness of his heart, took hold to help a neighbor harness a mule that he thought the neighbor was not handling properly, soon exchanged his role of good Samaritan for a roll in the mud. He arose and declared that in his opinion no man need look for perfect happiness in this world.

The sad story of Cleopatra's death is thus told by a rural poet:

"She got a little p'ison snake,
And hid it in her gown;
It gave its little tail a shake,
And did her job up brown."

We recently saw an old book, printed over fifty years ago, the title of which is, "Was she engaged?" We of course have no personal knowledge on the subject, but, on general principles, we'll engage that it was not her fault if she wasn't.

A steamer called the *Lake Breeze* plies on Lake Erie from Toledo to the Islands. The poets who express desires to ride on the wings of the wind can do the next best thing—take passage on the *Lake Breeze*.

The ice business is a monopoly in many cities, and new companies frequently spring up, to be bought off by the old ones. As Hamlet said, "There is no speculation in those ice" companies! Oh, no!

A gallant Alabama editor, in "noticing" a grocery kept by a woman, says, "Her tomatoes are as red as her own cheeks, her indigo as blue as her own eyes, and her pepper as hot as her own temper."

A Vermont girl, who sued a false lover for forty dollars for breach of promise, gave the court her rule of reckoning damages as follows: $1.25 a week for sitting up, and the cost of lights and fuel added.

A match was recently broken off by a printer, to whom the lover sent a sonnet to his sweetheart, entitled, "I kissed her sub rosa," but which the printer set up, "I kissed her snubnosa."

A woman has been presented to the grand jury of Owen county, Ky., as a witch. They are most all guilty, but as they are all pretty, it is difficult to tell which is witch.

A Kentucky huckster has over his stall this impressive moral injunction: "Any Man or Boy that taikes wun Appel Without Leave is a litil Roge in his Harte."

A venerable divine thinks that some of the young clergymen of the present day would make good martyrs—they are so dry they would burn well.

Coroners' juries in New Orleans call it probable murder when a corpse is found with a bullet in the brain and seven stabs in the back.

It is said that men will hug delusions. Out in the speculative mining districts it is seldom that a man will find his delusion an nugget.

None of the ladies now-a-days wear false hair. Having bought and paid for their shining tresses, is not the hair "their own?"

There is more harmony in cornet bands than in drum bands; for in the latter the musicians always come to blows.

Why is it that a freight train does not need a locomotive? Because the freight makes the cargo.

The marriage certificate is the United State bond most held by the people of this country.

Who is a greater dandy than the butcher? Nobody; for he is always dressed to kill.

Aged people are fond of telling stories; they have arrived at their anecdotage.

There is one thing which the stupidest person can always find, and that is, fault.

Ox-teams in cities are called "The epizootic express."

Oscar is suggested as a good name for a conductor on a street railroad.

An early spring—Jumping out of bed at five o'clock in the morning.

A kid is like a fast man—bound to goat while he is young.

An upright man is like a military band—sound to the corps.

An in-road—the well-beaten path to the tavern.

Whale a boy and you will find him full of blubber.

A backbiter—The rat terrier.

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CURRENT ITEMS.

At a Troy, N. Y., theatre, recently, while the audience was deeply interested in the play, a young child was observed walking down the aisle, her face and eyes showing traces of weeping, and the unwiped tears still trickling down her cheeks. After glancing hurriedly around, she darted forward toward a young woman sitting near the stage, and bending over behind her, faltered out, between her sobs, "O dear! O dear! father's dead!" The young woman hastily rose, and with the mourning messenger left the place, and for some time afterward there was not a murmur of applause nor a sign of a smile in the audience.

A dairyman from the interior of California lately perpetrated a heavy swindle on a San Francisco marketman to whom he sold a large quantity of first-class butter. After the dairyman had gone home with his money, it was discovered that he had packed from ten to fifteen pounds of cobble-stones and bricks in every firkin. The innocent marketman received his first information of the swindle from his customers when they began to bring the cobble-stones and bricks to him for inspection.

The only persons left at the Tiptop House on Mount Washington are three signal officers, who are equipped with a large stock of coal, four barrels of onions, about forty hams, twenty bushels of potatoes, a good supply of canned goods, and all manner of groceries in profusion, a violin, harmonicon, a good-sized library, and other tip-top material, to enable them to spend a pleasant winter.

A lady in California was so excited over the presentation of a lot of diamonds that she laid them in a dust-pan, and carefully covered them with a piece of paper, and afterward, in a fit of absent-mindedness, threw them out of the door. The entire family spent the next few days, after the loss was discovered, on their hands and knees searching for the precious stones, but without success.

A colored girl in attempting to cross the track of the Louisville and Nashville railroad, near Rich Pond, was struck by a passing train, caught upon the cow-catcher, and thrown back upon the pilot, and in this position was carried a distance of four miles, when the train stopped at a station and the girl was found to be unhurt.

A western paper states that a Terre Haute boy of tender years and heart has drowned seventeen kittens, tied pans to the tails of nine dogs, brushed his father's new silk hat against the grain, and blown up a pet canary with a fire-cracker, in the last month, and still his fond mother intends him for the pulpit.

A young girl, sixteen years old, and of unsound mind, recently strayed from her home and wandered three days and three nights in the woods near Lexington, Me., without food and barefooted, before she was discovered.

At a funeral, recently, one of the bearers of the coffin slipped and fell, causing the coffin to slip from the shoulders of the remaining bearers, and to fall upon the prostrate man, inflicting injuries from which he died.

A law has been passed preventing the erection of new buildings in Vienna during the progress of the exposition in 1873. This has been done with a view of preventing street obstructions.

A child, in Pittsburg, recently fell into a hole from which a post had been removed, and was drowned in the few inches of rain-water that had collected at the bottom.

All the nickel of which our coin is made comes from a mine in Lancaster county, Penn., which is said to be the only nickel mine in America.

The Philadelphia *Ledger* says a man at Yorkfield, Tenn., recently, was promptly shot on the spot for disturbing a congregation in church.

A girl of Columbus, Ohio, twenty years old, has just been sentenced to three years' imprisonment in the penitentiary for forgery.

The Khedive of Egypt is reported to be the richest man in the world, his annual income being fifty millions of dollars.

The tops of the pyramids are going to be converted into light-houses for the benefit of sailors on the Nile.

An Indian squaw has brought an action for breach of promise of marriage against a citizen of Olympia, W. T.

A pumpkin weighing 107 pounds has been raised in Indiana.

THE DENOUEMENT.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

I am going to be married;
Don't you envy me, dear girls,
When you look upon my trousseau,
Wedding-ring and bridal pearls?
I am going to be married,
Though my heart it still is free,
For I am not as old-fashioned
As my mother used to be.

She *would* wed with father, (bless him!)
A poor farmer, all for love—
Darn his stockings, churn his butter,
Meek as any cooing dove!
And she calls those days the brightest
Of her happy married life.
What a taste was hers, dear mother,
To be servant-maid and wife!

I am going to be married:
Though my lover is fourscore,
He has gold and silver plenty;
Pray what lass would ask for more?
I must never have a love time—
I must never ask a *mate*,
But do honor to my "veteran,"
Whom, to tell the truth, I—hate

But I 'm going to be married,
Though a sacrifice, or die;
And as swift amends hereafter,
How I 'll make his dollars fly!
What with shopping and with flirting,
What with dressing like a queen,
I 'll be the gayest little wife
That ever yet was seen.

Perhaps I 'll be a widow
Ere I 'm thirty—pray who knows?—
With a mint of ready money
And an ocean of fine clothes.
Then I 'll marry some young suitor
Who is handsome, although poor.
Hark! the marriage bells are ringing,
And the groom is at the door.

* * * * * *

Long, long years are past and over
Since this maiden chose her lot,
Yet the *old man still is living*,
Hale and hearty, and—why not?
While his wife has locks of silver,
And infirmities a score,
He can count of years a hundred,
And has hopes of many more!

A BONE of CONTENTION;

—OR—

The Waldemar Succession.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," "A DARING GAME," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER LIII.

A TALK WITH LORD WALDEMAR.

We will now resume our narrative of events occurring at Lady Thaxter's town residence upon that Saturday night when Darrel Moer and Grimrod, with their murderous resolves, went to Huntingdonshire.

Soon after dinner, Sir Hugh Tregaron went out to meet his lawyer, with whom he had appointed an hour's private evening conference, with a view to evolving some new plan of action, or some new theory in regard to Honor Glint's whereabouts. He promised Lady Rothsmere to return early, to learn the result of her ladyship's interview with Lord Waldemar, and if possible, to see the Baron.

Somewhere about half past nine o'clock, when Moer and Grimrod were speeding upon their way northward in an express train, Lady Thaxter's footman flung open the drawing-room door, and announced Lord Waldemar.

The stern old lord came in looking grand and stately, but there was a warm smile under his frost-white mustache, and an unwonted softness in his fiery black eyes, as his glances rested upon the beautiful and graceful Hungarian Countess. He took her hand in his, with a warm pressure. She received him with hardly concealed agitation, her thoughts upon the ungrateful task she had undertaken—that of enlightening his lordship in regard to the character of his villainous nephew.

Lord Waldemar had his usual bunch of cool, odorous wood violets for Lady Rothsmere, which he presented with a graceful compliment. He sat down, inaugurating a pleasant conversation, but presently Mrs. Early stole out, and soon after Lady Thaxter also withdrew, being called out by her housekeeper.

For the last week it had happened that soon after his arrival each evening at Lady Thaxter's house, Lord Waldemar had invariably been left alone with the beautiful Countess. The devotion of the grand old Baron to the lovely foreign lady, it would seem, had not been unmarked by Lady Thaxter as well as others.

"You are not at the House this evening, my lord," said Lady Rothsmere, inhaling the delicious perfume of her flowers. "I fear your country will not have cause to bless your personal friends. Lord Taxbury said last evening that your party expected a great triumph from you to-night. Ah, how sweet these violets are! They remind me of my young girlhood. They must have grown in the heart of some sunny old wood."

"They did. I have a man down in Kent who sends them up to me daily," said Lord Waldemar simply, as if he had taken no unusual trouble to gratify a lady's taste. "I always think of you in connection with wood violets, Countess, although you resemble more some tall and graceful lily."

"Thank you. A very pretty compliment, my lord; but I am not fond of compliments."

"If one were to speak to Lady Rothsmere only words of sincerest truth, those words would be all of praise," said the old lord gallantly. "Ah, Countess, what is this charm with which you have bound me? When I speak at the House, I raise my eyes to the gallery in the hope of seeing one face there—yours—which is an inspiration to me. Some magnet draws me to your side evening after evening. A house lighted by your presence is in perpetual sunshine. You diffuse a restfulness and peace which are like balm and sweetness to a passion-tossed soul."

"I am afraid I shall not diffuse such restfulness to-night," said the Countess, with a grave, sorrowful smile. "My lord, let us leave the regions of compliment, and talk of business. The word sounds oddly to you from my lips, does it not? I have something to say to you, and I fear you will not be inclined to pardon the interference in your family affairs of one who was so lately a stranger to you. Will you give me leave to speak freely?"

The Baron concealed the surprise he undoubtedly felt, and exclaimed with great earnestness:

"Say what you will, my dear Countess. I am only too happy that my family affairs should have awakened your interest."

"You are very kind," said the Hungarian Countess, in some embarrassment. "My lord, you remember and have frequently spoken of Miss Glint, the beautiful young lady who was a guest of Lady Thaxter last month. You seemed to take a keen interest in this young girl."

"I did, and do, Madam. She bears a striking resemblance to my dead son. I could not tell you yesterday, Countess, that the marks upon her arm to which you so carelessly alluded, were precisely similar to certain marks upon the arm of Miss Floyd, and which, in Miss Floyd's case, determined her identity with my son's child. I could almost believe this young Honor Glint to be my own granddaughter, if it were not for the evidence in Hilda's favor. Yet what evidence is there so strong as Honor's resemblance to my son? Were you about to speak to me about this girl's parentage?" cried his lordship agitatedly. "Can you tell me if Honor Glint is the actual daughter of Captain Glint?"

"Sir Hugh Tregaron told me that she is Captain Glint's adopted daughter, my lord, and that the Captain found her in Valetta sixteen years ago."

"Not Captain Glint's daughter! Then her resemblance to Wallace Floyd means something. She is of Hilda's age. Can I have been deceived? Can Hilda be an impostor, and can this beautiful girl with her radiant eyes be my grandchild? It is too good to believe. I will probe the mystery to the very bottom. And if it should prove true, and this girl prove to be my lineal descendant, I shall for ever bless you, dear Lady Rothsmere, for putting me upon the track of this mystery. My very soul repudiates Hilda, and turns to this sweet young Honor Glint."

"The question of the young lady's identity must be decided when she is found, but the first thing to be done is to find her. You know, my lord, that she strangely disappeared last month?"

"Yes, I know."

"We have had detectives searching for her everywhere, but they cannot find the young girl. Her enemies are cunning. She has been hidden away in some concealment scarcely less secret than the grave. She is in the power of an enemy as remorseless as death. We are at a standstill in our search, and she may be crying out to us from behind her prison bars. My lord, our only hope now is in you. You can perhaps throw light upon this question of her whereabouts."

"I!" exclaimed the Baron, in a sheer amazement.

"Yes, my lord," said the Countess, raising her shining sapphire eyes and pale, eager face to him. "This young girl's story has been kept from you through fear of wounding you. Sir Hugh Tregaron and Lady Thaxter shrink from telling you even now, and it is left for me, so recently a stranger to you, to break to you their suspicions. You suffered once, they tell me, through the disobedience, if it might be called so, of your son—pardon me, my dear lord, and hear me. We believe that you have fixed your affections upon your nephew. Can you bear to be told that he is an unscrupulous villain?"

"That is no news to me," said his lordship; "but how come you to know it, Countess?"

"My lord, Sir Hugh Tregaron, Lady Thaxter, and I also, believe your nephew Darrel Moer to be this remorseless enemy of Honor, and the cause of her disappearance."

The Baron seemed overwhelmed with astonishment.

"I presume Darrel is capable of stealing the girl away," he said; "but he does not know her."

"You mistake, my lord. Shall I go on? Shall I be the true friend to break this news to you? Darrel Moer did know Honor Glint. She stood in his way. She was his wife!"

Lord Waldemar seemed stupefied.

"You look incredulous," said the Countess, in her low, sweet, eager voice. "I said she was his wife. No, she was not that. He has been in Lancashire all winter; he paid suit to her. Mrs. Glint bade Honor seek another home, and Darrel Moer begged the girl to marry him. She was grateful to him, liked him, and accepted him. They were married in a chapel at Bolton, in February last; but their marriage was an empty form, an idle ceremony. They separated at the very altar. He so revealed his hideous moral nature in the very vestry of the chapel, that she fled from him as from a leper. She hid herself from him. As for him, he repented his marriage before he signed the marriage register. I sent a man to Bolton yesterday to procure a copy of the registry, to be used in intimidating Mr. Moer, and it is found that the leaf on which the marriage is registered is missing. There is no proof in existence either at Bolton or at Somerset House of that marriage. The only proof of it is contained in a simple certificate in Honor's hands, if it has not been stolen from her. Moer's man Bing went to Honor's lodgings in Southport, and nearly succeeded in stealing this certificate, and very probably it has since been taken from her by force."

"All this seems incredible!" cried the old lord, in a cruel agitation. "I have believed Darrel a villain, but this—this is monstrous! Why did he not avow his marriage to me? Nothing would delight me more than to receive this lovely girl into my family."

"She is poor, and Darrel Moer seeks to marry Miss Floyd," said Lady Rothsmere bitterly.

"But, Countess, even the loss of all these proofs does not invalidate the marriage. The witnesses remain, and I will see that justice shall be done this young girl when she is found."

"My lord, the absence of the proofs does not necessarily invalidate the marriage, but the existence of his first wife at the time of his second marriage does."

"Good Heaven! Do you mean that Darrel has committed bigamy?"

"Yes, my lord. He married Honor Glint in February last, but his wife, whom he married ten years ago, died only the night before last. She lies unburied at a retreat for the insane in Huntingdonshire."

"His wife, Countess? Are you sure?"

"I know whereof I speak, my lord," said the Countess firmly. "His lawful wife, Carmine Roff, formerly the actress known as La Belle Carmine, died in a farm stable within forty-eight hours last past."

"I questioned Darrel about Miss Roff the other day, my lady, and he said—pardon me—that he was never married to her."

Lady Rothsmere produced the two copies of the registry of Moer's marriage to Miss Roff, and silently gave them into Lord Waldemar's hands. He read them.

"You see, Baron," said her ladyship, when he had finished, "that Darrel Moer married Carmine Roff, at St. Helen's church, Brighton, in the year 1859. He carried his wife abroad, but tiring of her—you know how fickle he is—and conceiving that he had injured his prospects by his union with her, he determined never to avow it, and suffered people to think her not his wife. He wronged that proud-souled woman most cruelly. He drove her mad, and now she is at last dead."

"What a wretched villain he is! Why, he has proposed to me for the hand of Hilda Floyd."

"He desires to marry her for money and position."

"I left him at my house this evening, the accursed scoundrel!" cried Lord Waldemar. "He seemed the impersonation of carelessness and innocence. That he should marry Miss Glint while he had a wife living—that he should desire to marry Hilda, and so add another crime to the hideous category—bad as he is, Lady Rothsmere, I could hardly believe all this from any other informant. Why have I not been told before?"

"Sir Hugh Tregaron shrank from telling you without being able to produce proofs in support of his assertions, but he is nevertheless convinced that Moer has hidden away Miss Glint."

"Yes, Darrel must be guilty."

"Do you know any place, my lord, to which Moer might have taken Miss Glint? Does he own any secluded property where Honor might be safely hidden?"

"No—why, yes. I gave him a farm in Huntingdonshire, among the fens, with a 'haunted house' attached, in which no one can be found to live on account of its evil reputation, and yet which is in excellent repair. It is known as the Cypresses, and would be the very spot in which to imprison any one. But it 's a long journey from Bolton, at which place Miss Glint was last seen. He could not have removed her upon a railway train. How could he have transferred her from Bolton to the Cypresses?"

"He is a man of infinite resources for evil. The Cypresses! Honor is there! I feel it—I know it. She is shut up there in the wild and lonely district of the fens!"

The Countess spoke the words in the greatest excitement. Her lovely face flushed. Her eyes glowed.

The door opened, and the hall porter came in with two letters upon a tray. One had come by post, and the other had just been left at the house by a private messenger. Both were addressed to the Countess.

Lady Rothsmere opened the stamped letter first.

It had been written in the afternoon of this same day, and was signed with the name of the detective officer her ladyship had taken into her employ on the previous day. It contained these words:

"Mr. Darrel Moer was married at St. Jude's church, London, W., this day at eleven o'clock, to Miss Hilda Floyd, granddaughter of Lord Waldemar. Wedding secret. Only witnesses a Mrs. Watchley and Lord Waldemar's business manager, Mr. Grimrod. The party all gone to Crystal Palace, Sydenham, for the day."

The Countess handed the letter to the Baron. He read it with a lowering brow and eyes that emitted sparks of anger. He found himself actually unable to speak.

Lady Rothsmere perused the second missive, that which had been left at the house by a special messenger. It was from the detective now on guard over Moer's movements—the substitute of the first writer. The note ran as follows, in very indifferent orthography:

"The bird has taken to his wings. Followed him to station. Took up-express. Ticket for Somersham Station, Huntingdonshire. Lord Waldemar's business manager went on same train, to same place. The two men seemed to avoid each other at station. Got into separate carriages. Looks as if something was up. Did not follow, as had no orders."

Lady Rothsmere gave this message into Lord Waldemar's hands. He read it, and they looked at each other a full minute in silence.

"Somersham is the nearest station to the Cypresses," said the Baron at last. "It 's ten or twelve miles from the farm. He has gone to her. You are right. Honor is at the Cypresses."

"And she does not know that she is not his wife!"

"It seems," said Lord Waldemar, in a labored voice, glancing at the letters, "that Grimrod and Mrs. Watchley assisted at this marriage to-day of Hilda and Darrel Moer. Grimrod is treacherous to me, you see. It is hard to believe it. And he has gone with Moer to the Cypresses to-night. Why have they gone, if Darrel's marriage with Hilda to-day is legal?"

The Countess could not answer.

A cold sweat started in big beads on the Baron's forehead. His face became ghastly pale.

"Countess," he whispered, "I suspect—how can I say it? To-night—at dinner—when we were alone—I told Darrel I suspected that Honor Glint is my grandchild, and that Hilda is an impostor. I told him I should investigate the facts of Honor's parentage. Can you not see? He has gone—to—to rid himself of her claims—to remove her forever."

The Countess sprang up with a wild shriek.

"Oh, my lord!" she cried, "we must go to her—to Honor. We must save her. We will take a special train. Here comes Sir Hugh Tregaron. We will all go!"

"Not you, Countess!" cried the Baron, in astonisment.

"Yes, I too! My woman shall go with me. I must go, my lord. Send a messenger to order a special train. I can be ready in ten minutes. Do not try to dissuade me. I must go."

There was that in the wild, imploring face that stilled the expostulations upon the Baron's lips.

Sir Hugh Tregaron came in, and Lord Waldemar explained to him the state of affairs, while the Hungarian Countess flitted away to acquaint her hostess with her plans and to don her travelling garb.

The Baron's communication plunged Sir Hugh into the wildest alarm.

"I 'll go down and order the special train," said the young Cornish Baronet. "I fear Lady Rothsmere is preparing unnecessary fatigue for herself, but she has become greatly attached to Honor, and she has some purpose regarding Darrel Moer which I do not understand, so that her presence with us is not unfitting. Shall you go home before starting on your journey, my lord?"

"No. I wait only to escort Lady Rothsmere to the station."

Sir Hugh hurried away upon his errand. Within fifteen minutes, Lady Rothsmere, in a quiet travelling costume, attended by her maid, and accompanied by Lady Thaxter and Mrs. Early, returned to the drawing-room. The Countess had resisted all the dissuasions of her friends, only repeating her assertion that she must go. A cab was at the door—sent by Tregaron. Lady Rothsmere, with hasty adieux to her hostess and friends, entered the cab, her maid followed, Lord Waldemar took his place, and they drove swiftly down the street, proceeding to the railway station.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE SEARCH NARROWING TO A POINT.

Thanks to the promptness and energy of Sir Hugh Tregaron, Lord Waldemar's party had not long to wait at the station for their special train to Somersham. The young Cornish Baronet received them upon their arrival in the cab, and conducted them to the single first-class passenger coach, to which the small fretting locomotive, with its beaming headlight, was already attached, and they presently steamed out of the station, flying in pursuit of the intending murderers.

The Hungarian Countess was very silent throughout the journey, but Lord Waldemar and Sir Hugh talked and speculated, and finally arrived at something like a clear comprehension of both Moer and Grimrod.

The Baron could not resist a conviction of his manager's treachery and wickedness. The fact that Grimrod had attended the wedding between Moer and Hilda Floyd, knowing that the Baron had discountenanced the match, proved the former charge. And the fact that he had gone with Moer to the Cypresses was held as sufficient proof of the latter.

"Had I made this discovery a month ago, the shock would have been terrible to me," said the old lord. "I had implicit faith in Grimrod, but now I have new hopes and interests, and his defection does not leave the blank in my life it would once have done."

His lordship glanced involuntarily at Lady Rothsmere as he alluded to his "new hopes and interests," but the lovely Countess was looking through the window into the darkness, and she did not hear him. Her hands were clasped tightly together upon her lap, and her attitude was that of one whose every nerve is strung in an unbearable suspense.

She maintained this attitude during the entire journey.

On arriving at Somersham, the party proceeded to the best hotel. Sir Hugh ordered a sitting-room and bedrooms for the Countess and her maid, and a horse and wagon for Lord Waldemar and himself. The old Baron escorted her ladyship up to her sitting-room, resisting her entreaties to be allowed to accompany him and Sir Hugh to the Cypresses.

"The road is not good, my dear Countess," he said to her, "and you will be terribly jolted. No, no, I cannot consent. Leave the matter to Sir Hugh and me. We will go to the Cypresses, and will hasten back with Honor. There may be fighting; Moer and Grimrod are no doubt desperate; and we shall have to take a constable with us. Remain here patiently, I entreat you. We will bring Honor to you before morning."

Nothing remained for the Countess but to acquiesce, and to school herself to patience. Lord Waldemar and Sir Hugh drove away, and she walked her floor hour after hour upon that long, miserable night, while her maid dozed in an arm-chair.

This was that night in which Honor had escaped from the Cypresses and found refuge in the cottage of Mrs. Williams.

Lord Waldemar and Sir Hugh, accompanied by a Somersham constable, drove out upon the lonely road winding through the fens, and some time after midnight drove up to the rear door of the old "haunted house" at the Cypresses.

The constable beat a fierce tattoo upon the door.

Miss Bing hurried from the kitchen, where she had been crouching before the fire ever since her discovery of Honor's escape, and unfastened the door, crying out:

"Have you found her? Oh—"

The latter exclamation was elicited by the discovery that it was not Darrel Moer who had aroused her. She essayed to close the door, but Sir Hugh Tregaron leaped into the hall, followed by his friends.

"Lead us to Miss Glint!" cried the young Cornish Baronet, his voice ringing, his eyes flashing.

The woman uttered a cry of dismay.

Sir Hugh repeated his demand yet more peremptorily.

"Miss Glint is not here," declared the terrified spinster.

"Where is she?"

"She has escaped—gone to London—hours ago!" gasped Miss Bing.

Sir Hugh dashed past the woman into the kitchen, seizing a lighted candle, and commenced a rapid search of the lonely old house. The constable compelled Miss Bing to attend them.

They found the room in which Honor had so long been confined. Her sewing materials, the dying fire on the hearth, a worn blue ribbon, all testified whose room this had been. The shutters were nailed tightly now, and the window was closed securely, but the rope Honor had manufactured from the sheets and blankets lay across the denuded bed, and corroborated Miss Bing's story of Honor's recent escape.

"What is your name, woman?" demanded the constable.

"Judith Bing," faltered the spinster.

"Bing—Bing!" said Lord Waldemar. "Are you a relative of Mr. Moer's valet?"

"Yes—yes, sir. I'm Bing's sister."

"Humph!" said the old Baron, in a stern voice, looking at her with his fiery gaze, which greatly increased her terror. "Are you in the employ of Darrel Moer?"

The woman looked about her, as if searching for some loop-hole of escape. The constable gripped her arm more closely, and roughly commanded her to speak, telling her of his official character. Evidently giving up Moer's cause for lost, and desiring to save herself from the ruin threatening him, Miss Bing resolved to save herself at all cost, and gasped out:

"I'll turn queen's evidence, I will. I'll tell the truth. I know it's transportation, or penal servitude, but I thought she was his wife, and a man can treat his wife as he likes. And so—and so— Oh, I'm not to blame! I'm a poor lone woman, as was led away by my betters. Mr. Moer, he is a gentleman as ought to know what from what, and he said as how the girl was his wife, which I see the marriage certificate, and I'm not to blame, and I won't tell without I'm promised to be let go."

"You will not be punished, if you tell us the truth," said Lord Waldemar. "But you must speak promptly. Has Darrel Moer been here this evening?"

"Ye-s, sir."

"Did he take the young lady away with him?"

"No, sir; she was gone before he came. When he drove up, that rope was dangling out o' window. He tore off like a madman, and I haven't seen him since. He went Somersham way."

"We did not meet him," said Sir Hugh.

"He may have turned off a side road, or turned into the fens," said the constable.

"How did Miss Glint come here from Bolton?" inquired the Baron.

"In a gipsy wagon, along of my brother and his girl, both disguised as gipsies," said Miss Bing tearfully. "But my brother was led away by his master, sir. Watson is not a bad man, that he isn't. It's all along of Mr. Moer, if there's any harm done, which I don't see," she added, waxing bolder. "Mr. Moer brought his wife to his own house, which was a natural thing for a gentleman to do, although he 's never been to see her but once, and then treated her as respectful as if she were the queen."

The gentlemen interrogated Miss Bing still further, and were satisfied that she had told them the truth.

"The young lady has gone to London, gentlemen," said the constable, in a tone of conviction. "She got away safe enough, and is with her friends at this moment."

Having searched the entire house from attic to cellar, they descended to the kitchen, and took their leave of Miss Bing, who believed them about to return to town immediately, and was overjoyed at her escape from the meshes of the law. But out of doors, upon the gloomy lawn, in the shade of the cypress trees, the three men halted, and the constable having reiterated his belief that Honor was now safe in London, Sir Hugh said quietly:

"We will telegraph from Somersham. It is quite evident that the woman has told us the truth so far as she knows it. It is evident that Miss Glint has escaped, has eluded her enemies, and that they are now searching for her. We may find her at Somersham. She must have gone to the nearest station. I do not think her enemies have captured her. She will be on her guard. We must go back."

They reëntered the wagon and drove back to the town.

They did not meet Moer or Grimrod on the way, the two villains being then engaged in searching the fens for their escaped victim.

On arriving at the town, they drove directly to the station and made inquiries; but no young lady answering to Honor's description had been seen there that evening. They went to every public-house, but failed of course to gain any tidings of the young fugitive. Last of all, they went back to the Hungarian Countess, who met them at the door of her sitting-room, white and eager, with wild and questioning eyes.

She read their failure in their looks, and silently turned away.

"Don't despair, dear Lady Rothsmere," said the old lord. "We shall find her yet. She has escaped from her prison, and God will protect her, and keep her from the fangs of those pursuing hounds."

"Escaped! escaped!"

"Yes, she 's around the country somewhere. She may have heard us rattling by to-night, and taken us for her enemies, and so concealed herself in the way-side bushes or in the fens. We shall find her to-morrow."

"To-day," said the Countess. "It is almost dawn."

"I did not think of it before," said Sir Hugh, "but Miss Bing said that Honor arrived at the Cypresses at night, and how then could she have known the way to Somersham? She is likely to have gone in an opposite direction, or to have turned into some side road leading nowhere in particular. We shall find her safe and well."

Lord Waldemar was greatly fatigued, and retired to his room. Sir Hugh ordered a fresh horse to be put to the wagon, and went away with the constable, searching lonely and by-roads, and going miles upon the road beyond the Cypresses. He saw nothing of the two villains who were also searching the same ground with assiduity. About the middle of the afternoon, he called at the Cypresses again with the constable, but Moer and Grimrod had not been at the house since the visit of the former on the previous night. The pursuers, hungry, tired and dispirited, returned to Somersham, to find that Honor had not yet appeared there.

Sir Hugh telegraphed to Lady Thaxter, asking if she had heard from Honor, and received a reply in the negative. With this he returned to the sitting-room of his party at the hotel.

He found Lord Waldemar alone in the room, walking the floor disconsolately. He reported his failure to find any trace of the missing girl, and inquired for Lady Rothsmere.

"I haven't seen her ladyship since you went away," grumbled the Baron. "I've been waiting here an hour. I've ordered dinner. You've eaten nothing to-day, I dare say, Tregaron?"

"No, I have eaten nothing."

"This won't do, my dear boy. Honor is safe, I feel it. How are you going to help her by getting yourself sick? You must go to bed and sleep till morning."

"I shall go out again after dinner. I cannot sleep, my lord, while she is perhaps in danger."

Lady Rothsmere emerged from her room, attended by her maid, and Sir Hugh gave the history of his day's researches.

"Did you inquire at any way-side house at which Honor might possibly have taken refuge, Sir Hugh?" asked her ladyship.

The young Baronet started, and his worn face lighted with a sudden glow.

"We inquired at one or two, but not at all," he said. "The road between Somersham and the Cypresses is sparsely settled. I will go out again and inquire at every house. Honor is likely to have become tired and stopped at some farm-house."

"If you go again to the Cypresses to-day, I must go too," said the Countess. "This inaction and suspense are terrible—unbearable. I long for the fresh air, and to feel that I am doing something too."

Lord Waldemar looked in pitying tenderness at the lovely blue eyes filled with a brooding terror and anguish, and said gently:

"We will go again to the Cypresses, this evening. If Darrel should find Honor, he would take her there. We will inquire at every house on the way, and you, Lady Rothsmere, can accompany us."

"I propose, my lord," said Sir Hugh, "that the constable and I go on a half hour in advance in the wagon, and stop at every house to make inquiries, and that you drive the Countess over in a pony chaise which I can procure for you. We will meet on the road or at the Cypresses, and her ladyship will then be spared the delays and anxieties which I must meet."

The suggestion was received with favor. Lord Waldemar was especially pleased.

Dinner was served at six o'clock. Soon after dusk Sir Hugh Tregaron and the constable set out for the Cypresses, and half an hour later Lord Waldemar and the Hungarian Countess entered the pony chaise and drove out of the town, also on their way to the Cypresses.

Sir Hugh and his aid made inquiries at every house without success, and but one more, a mere cottage, remained to visit. This was the cottage of Mrs. Williams, some five miles distant from the Cypresses. As they approached this, they heard frantic screams, as of one in anguish. Driving up, they beheld Mrs. Williams seated on her door-step in an utter abandonment of grief.

Sir Hugh leaped from the wagon and approached her, addressing her respectfully.

"Can you inform me, Madam," he asked, "if a young lady has passed this way since early last evening? Is it possible that she can have taken refuge with you?"

Mrs. Williams looked up, hushing her cries.

"Who are you?" she demanded.

"My name is Sir Hugh Tregaron," replied the Baronet. "I am looking for a young lady, Miss Honor Glint, who escaped last night from her enemies—"

The woman interrupted him with a cry of joy.

"Oh, sir," she cried, springing up, "if you are her friend, save her, save her! They mean to kill her. They dragged her out of my house, before my very eyes, not twenty minutes ago. My poor little Hilda! Oh, they will kill her! They have taken her that way—toward the Cypresses!"

Sir Hugh ran back to the wagon, and the woman hurried with him, demanding to be taken too. She clambered in over the wheel without help, the Baronet leaped in, and the constable whipped up the horse to a dead gallop.

"To the Cypresses!" cried Sir Hugh, in a low, concentrated voice, freighted with the wildest excitement and suspense. "To the Cypresses! Oh, my God! shall we arrive in time to save her?"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

EDITORS VERSUS GENTLEMEN.

John F. Coles, in the other years editor of the "N. E. Washingtonian," never allows the expense of a hit at his individuality to stand in the way of a good story. (John is at present at the head, as its Patriarchal Chief, of the Grand Division, of the S. of T., of Massachusetts. And he gives honor to the place. God keep and bless him! A truer man never lived.)

One of John's stories was substantially as follows: (Remember, this was seven-and-twenty years ago; but we haven't forgotten—nobody can ever forget who has heard John Coles tell a story.)

"We had travelled," said John, editorially, in giving an account of a Western trip, "a good many hundred miles, by land and by water. The hotel keepers, steam-boat captains, and conductors generally, chalked our hat, and indignantly refused to permit us to pay our way. In short, whether upon the 'raging canawl,' upon the broad lake—in cabin or in hotel—we had a great 'free blow,' being universally ticketed as a *dead-head*. It was certainly very agreeable, but it had its drawbacks. There was one 'free blow' in particular which came near demolishing us.

"While on board one of the splendid steamers which ply between Buffalo and Chicago the yellow fuz upon our chin had grown to an uncomfortable length, and we repaired to the barber's shop, in the fore-peak, to have it taken off. The tonsorial darkey was all smiles and bows. He shaved us in a most artistic manner, oiled and combed our head, brushed and smoothed our clothes, and, in short, slicked us up so nicely that we felt like a new man; and in the fulness of our gratitude we pulled out a dime and offered it to him as a reward for his services. He drew himself up with pompous dignity.

"'I understands,' said he, 'dat you is an editor.'

"'Well,—what of that?' said we.

"'We nebber charge *editors* noff'n,' said he.

"'But, my woolly friend,' said we, still presenting the dime, 'there must be a good many editors travelling now-a-days, and such unbounded liberality on your part will work your financial ruin.'

"'Nebber you fear ob dat,' said he, with a patronizing nod; 'we lets you editors go free, *and makes it up off de gen'l'men!*'"

With a knowledge of this new distinction John put his dime back into his pocket, and sloped.

S. C., JR.

BLUNT MEN.

"You 'll like him if you can get along with him," said Digby, speaking of the man whom we had thought of hiring for a clergyman—"if you can put up with his rough ways. He is a plain, blunt man,—perhaps too blunt,—but he means well."

We tried Mr. Blunt, and we had enough of him; and since that time we have had but one opinion of so-called blunt men,—we mean your men who blurt out their thoughts without regard to time or place. The Lord deliver us from them! We want none of them. They may speak the truth, but they produce only evil. Having no sensibility of their own, they care not for it in others. Electricity is vivifying and life-supporting,—without it, in this bleak December, we should shiver and die,—but when it comes with a thunderbolt, it is death. Heat is generous and glorious; but we don't want a bar of red-hot iron dropped upon our head. The rain, when it comes in gentle drops, is gladsome and refreshing; but the tempest we do not covet.

And so in the intercourse of life,—we need to have our faults pointed out, and our errors exposed; but it can be done in Christian kindness and sympathy,—the story of our sin can be told with tenderness and good-will, and the chiding can be administered without harshness. We don't want sledge-hammer admonition, nor do we like that our dream of peace—mistaken though it be—should be broken by an icy shower-bath. In short, we don't like these coarse-grained, blunt men. C.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1872.

Better Than Ever.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER
FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1873.

THE GREAT FAMILY PAPER.

Instructive and entertaining as the *Ledger* has been in the past, we hope and intend to make it still more instructive and entertaining in the future. Our experience is greater than heretofore, and our ambition to make the *Ledger* the best paper of the kind published in the world, is undiminished.

It is the aim of the *Ledger* to cultivate a taste for reading in the rising generation, and at the same time, by the character of its contents, to contribute constantly to their moral and intellectual improvement and growth.

An epicure might as well undertake to write down what he would have for dinner every day for twelve months to come, as for us to attempt, at this time, a catalogue of all the good things that will be spread before the readers of the *Ledger* in 1873. Our old subscribers will bear us witness that all the promises we have ever made have always been more than fulfilled. We never let slip an opportunity to obtain any really good and desirable thing. Expense and trouble never stand in our way. And in this respect, as it has been in the past, so it will be in the future.

The *Ledger* is particularly devoted to the interests and welfare of the young. A vast number of questions about lovers' quarrels, propositions of marriage, plans for housekeeping, and the best means of brightening the future of youthful married couples, are answered in its columns.

One great and guiding principle with us is to inculcate the sentiments of self-respect and self-reliance, and thus to strengthen and render more manly the characters which are just assuming form, to endure through all their days.

The *Ledger* is always full of life. Nobody ever complains that even a single number is dull.

It has the largest number of great and distinguished writers.

It contains the purest, sweetest and most delightful stories, striking narratives, and instructive biographical and historical sketches.

It has the most popular and carefully prepared collection of scientific facts.

Many of the most distinguished clergymen of the country write for it.

All our favorite old writers will continue to write for the *Ledger;* and we are always on the keen look-out for any new developments of *real* rising genius.

OUR TERMS FOR 1873—NOW IS THE TIME TO SUBSCRIBE.

Single copies, $3 per annum; four copies, $10, which is $2.50 a copy; eight copies, $20. The party who sends us $20 for a club of eight copies, (all sent at one time,) will be entitled to a copy *free.* Postmasters and others who get up clubs, in their respective towns, can afterwards add single copies at $2.50. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year. Canada subscribers must send twenty cents in addition to the subscription, to pay the American postage. When a draft or money-order can conveniently be sent, it will be preferred, as it will prevent the possibility of the loss of money by mail. The postage on the *Ledger* to all parts of the country is only twenty cents a year, or five cents a quarter, payable at the office where the paper is delivered.

☞ We employ no travelling agents. Address all communications to

ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

The Inconveniences of a Vigilance Committee.

Certain influential prints accompany lists of alleged criminals, who are living in our public institutions at the cost of the city, with negative hints of new agencies for the doing of the proper work of the law courts. If the accumulation of these persons should proceed, as at present, new measures will probably be forced on the community; but they need not necessarily be in the form suggested by deprecation. A Vigilance Committee, however judiciously it works, has some inevitable inconveniences.

It is, for example, a reflection on the laws, on the judges, and these officials being the popular choice, on the people. It injures the reputation of a city, and where the place is commercial, capitalists are shy of placing their money in regions where law is only a speculative study.

Committees known as "Vigilance" do not keep regular minutes, and by the nature of their composition they include prompt and energetic persons. The appointment of two-thirds of all other committees is the same as inaction. "How not to do it" being the problem, "appoint a committee," is the common solution. The "Vigilance" is an exception to this rule. Its meetings are very informal. It is called "Vigilance," not because of its watching itself, but its watching other people. From the quick and direct way in which it proceeds, it is liable to mistakes; may hurt the wrong person, or hurt excessively.

Such a Committee makes no reports. It only shows results. They consist of human bodies suspended from lamp posts and other fixtures put up for entirely different purposes, or perforated with bullets. It settles its accounts summarily, and it is the dead men who have to do with the auditing. *Their* accounts are probably, in most cases, in a bad form—still there is a way of doing things "*est modus in rebus.*"

Such a Committee, not having definite and formal instructions, does not always know where to stop. Murderers are within its province. Very well. But are not educated and cool slanderers who deliberately murder character as bad, radically, as poor Jerry Shoulder-hitter who never went to school, and was half mad from drink? He only knocked off a ruffian. They kill honest men. Let the Committee make them a visit; and—"vacancies in the editorial corps of —— and —— newspapers!"

But killing and libelling are not the only crimes. There are your Wall street scoundrels, who neither kill nor libel; yet they take bread from the mouths of honest people. They rob in daylight. They steal—not pitiful old horses, as "out West." They run off stock—not as marauding Indians do, but in ways of their own, and by the million. "Justice" can't touch them, or won't. Call up the Vigilance Committee! "Suspension of Jones!" from a corner lamp, my dear sir, by the Committee. "Settlement of Brown"—by the Committee, with pistols. These things, you see, my dear sir, might expedite matters; but they might do other things also. They would derange business in the end, and be very unpleasant.

What then? Why, the Vigilance Committee had better not appoint itself. But if things are very bad, let the men who have quite clean hands come together and set down on paper what they complain of, and what they want done, and ask their fellow-citizens to come together to hear it, and if they approve, act upon it, and instead of scattering shot loosely all round the horizon, say, "There is Mr. A, or Judge B, failing in his duty. Now *he must do it,* or get out of the way."

When dreadful evils grow, and the people's servants are remiss in their duty, instead of a Vigilance Committee we consider this the "more excellent way."

Professional Honor—Communicating the Secrets of the Sick-Room.

The *World*—one of the most respectable of our cotemporaries—published, on the morning of Nov. 29th, what purported to be a conversation between Dr. HAMMOND, one of the consulting physicians of the Hon. HORACE GREELEY, and a reporter of that paper.

According to this account, Dr. HAMMOND said:

"I was sent for yesterday—Thursday—but having business of great importance on hand, I was unable to go. This morning I went down, and found Mr. Greeley in a very sad condition. His mind is quite gone. He does not know his friends, and speaks quite incoherently. While I was at his bedside, Mr. Weed, an old friend of Mr. Greeley's, came up, and wishing to test Mr. Greeley, I said, 'Mr. Greeley, do you know Mr. Weed?' Mr. Greeley stared vacantly at Mr. Weed, and answered that he had never met him in his life before, and did not know him; and said he further, 'I never heard the name of Weed before.'"

* * * * * * *

"He talks incoherently the whole time, and is quite obstinate. If one wants him to show the pupil of his eye, he immediately closes his eyelid tightly, and refuses point-blank to let anybody look at him. If his pulse has to be felt, he struggles and keeps his wrist hidden as long as he can. He refuses to eat anything from a spoon, so we had to administer beef-tea through a tube."

* * * * * * *

"He does not know his own daughter. He keeps talking the whole time, but as what he says is quite unintelligible, of course no notice is taken of it. One thing he kept repeating over and over again while I was there was, 'I died when I was born, and I was born when I died.'"

Now, while we ordinarily trust to the accuracy of the *World's* reports, we can hardly believe it possible that a physician of the celebrity and standing of Dr. HAMMOND could so far forget the obligations of his position as to make such a communication as this to the public press.

It would certainly be very damaging to any gentleman in the medical profession to have it generally believed that, through his instrumentality, the eyes of the public would be permitted to follow him into the privacy of every sick-room which he enters.

It seems to us that there is a sanctity about the chamber of illness and the bed of death, which should prevent any one who is called there from necessity, and in consequence of his supposed skill, from publishing to the gaping world every circumstance which falls under his observation.

We cannot believe that Dr. HAMMOND would do such a thing.

Where to Settle—Healthy Localities.

People are growing wiser on the subject of health. They appreciate its importance and value better than they used to.

When they are looking out for a new home now, their first inquiry is, Is it healthy?

This is wise. No matter how fertile land may be, no matter how beautiful the rivers, or sunny the skies, man should not dwell where health is not.

Nothing compensates for the loss of health. What avails your immense growth of crops, if the fever and ague be growing in your blood and bones with like exuberance?

Emigrants to the West cannot be too careful on this point. To say nothing of the danger to one's self, what moral right has any person to expose his family and children unnecessarily to illness and death?

The mistake for a long time prevailed of regarding chills and fever as a temporary and rather contemptible inconvenience merely. People laughed and joked about "the shakes" as if it were something they could soon shake off.

But experience has shown that chills and fever impair the strength of the constitution, and expose it to other and more directly fatal diseases.

Health and happiness are almost as nearly related as twin brothers. It is not worth while to try to separate them.

Never Play a Part.

Be what you are, and do not be ashamed of it. If Heaven made you this, or that, or the other, you *are* that and nothing else. You are only a plain person: very well; it is good to be a plain person. At all events, don't try to be stylish, nor pretend that your uncle, the shoemaker, was an English nobleman. You have no "grand aspirations," no "yearning after lofty things," so don't pretend that you have. Neither roll your eyes, nor quote poetry that you do not understand. You can't play the piano; then don't say you are "out of practice." Out with your opinions. If you think a thing wrong, say so; don't wink at it because it is fashionable. Take the common-sense which God has given you and use it. Some silly folk may smile, but you will meet with some one, after a while, who will appreciate your truthfulness, and say, "No humbug there," and take you at your true value. And if not, why, you will respect yourself, and *that* a humbug never does.

Giving to the Poor.

An exchange announces:

"Gladstone's wife gives at least four hours of each day to the poor."

We are always disgusted with this sort of pompous announcement of benefits to the poor. How much money and how much bread does the wife of England's Premier give them? That's the question.

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—At a recent dinner at one of the Clubs, a bachelor proposed as a toast, "Our Future Wives." The married men present said they could join in that sentiment.

Hiding Money in a Wall.

[From the Poughkeepsie (N. Y.) Press.]

John Martin's wife died recently at Brownville, Sullivan county. Her husband, it is reported, in examining the cellar wall, a few days since, found $350 in gold and silver, besides a large amount in greenbacks, etc. She has been very economical for many years, and was providing for old-age.

LEARNING TO WRITE.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

No one so well as an editor can form an idea of the number of people who attempt to eke out a subsistence by literary efforts. If we say that nine parts out of ten of the offerings are quite worthless, it must not be construed into either a contempt for well-meant efforts, or as a discouragement of trying to write well.

We exhort every young man to endeavor to possess the art of ready composition, facile conversation and fluent public speech. Of course, if one aims at a professional life, he will do this; but it should be a part of the education of every intelligent man and woman.

It would be well for the young to know what to aim at. In other words, the art of composition is not well taught, and people waste much time in doing what they can't do, and neglect the very things which they can do.

The very best beginning which a child can make is by letter writing. He will naturally speak of things familiar to him. He will, too, have an object to accomplish by writing. He will naturally find topics in the company, the events of domestic life, the barn-yard happenings, the garden, the school, the mishaps or blunders—which are always going to those who have an eye to see them. There are three kinds of writing, judged psychologically: descriptive writing, the fruit of observation, or the perceptive faculties; reflective writing, or the fruit of the reasoning power; and emotional writings, or those which give expression to the feelings. Of course, the best composition is that which mingles all of these. But *in learning to write,* it makes a great difference which of these modes of composition, the perceptive, the reflective, or the emotional, is attempted.

Descriptive writing is the most natural for one beginning to write. Reflection comes much later than perception. But in order to descriptive writing must be the habit of accurate observation—sharp, discriminating, minute. One must not write what he has read in the books about nature, but what he has seen and made sure of. For example, to speak of the milkmaid's song, which is so pleasing an element of old English poetry, would be absurd in a land where men do the milking, and where women almost never sing out of doors, being accustomed to only indoor work.

The "whistling plowman" has quite died out in America. Thatched cottages, and woodbines in the hedge, and crimson-tipped daisies, and the larks that sing at heaven's gate, are all foreign. Men do not see such things in America. We do not "dance on the green," nor hold revels under the vast old oaks. Let one begin by learning how to observe; let him put down in writing nothing that he has not perceived; if he is in doubt about an epithet, or a fact, let him go out and ascertain—stick to your own eyes. Let what you write reflect truly your own sensations, observations and reflections. They may be rude. But be rude and crude while learning to tell just how nature looks to *you,* and not to somebody else very differently constituted.

The habit once formed of honest truthful description, will gradually open into all the other kinds of writing.

It would be well for one to have a composition book, and every day write in it, at his best, the sights and events of the day—not a long history of insignificant nothings, but some going and coming, some curious story heard; a ludicrous scene, if one has happened; an errand; how a tree looked at sunset against the blazing west; the way the doves whirled in the air going north, breaking up suddenly and rising high up, whirling eastward, and after miles of sweep come back to the roof of the barn, as if that was what they meant to do at the start!

But we are consuming too much space. There are some other thoughts about writing that perhaps can wait a week. Begin to write. Keep on writing. Write about things of which you know. See to it that your composition is sharply true. Observe and think!

A Rocky Mountain Post-Office.

——, COLORADO.

Editor of the Ledger—DEAR SIR: As I read an article entitled "A Country Post-office," in a recent number of the New York *Ledger,* I could not help thinking of the forcible contrast between the "Frogland Station Post-office" and the one that I have charge of out here in the Rocky Mountains.

All frontier towns possess alike the peculiarity of having a community consisting of people of nearly every nation of the earth.

Ludicrous indeed would be the expression of "Uncle Pete's" countenance, could the throng who present themselves daily at this office for letters all make application at once, some fine morning, at the "Frogland Station Post-office" for their mail.

As the window opens, after the distribution of the mail, up rushes a crowd representing almost every race and nation, and of every conceivable condition of society.

Here comes a long-haired ranger, clad in a suit of fringed buckskin, with revolvers and knife in his belt. Close behind him is a mild-looking clergyman, who has "come West for his health," and over his shoulder shines the eager, jolly face of some English traveller, who takes his mail with a "*Really! aw, thanks.*"

Off at one side stands "Ah-Sin" of the Flowery Kingdom, meekly waiting till the throng disperses, when he will step up and get his letter, all covered with strange characters, and then slip quietly away. There will also be a group of swarthy Mexicans, who will inquire for "Sr. Don Pasquale Garcia," or "Polidoro Chavez," or most any other imaginable high-sounding Spanish name. It is a remarkable fact that these Mexicans—"greasers," as they are called—low and degraded as they are, can almost invariably read and write the Spanish language with readiness.

And so the crowd comes and goes—missionaries and murderers, educated and cultured tourists and weather-beaten miners, renowned artists and wily horse-thieves, literary men whose names are familiar in every household of the land, and desperate gamblers, European capitalists and highway robbers. And away out here, at the foot of Pike's Peak, and perhaps three thousand miles from where she was born, a little apple-cheeked girl will crowd her way up to the delivery window with, "I thay, thir, mother wanth to know if her *Ledger* ith come yet."

Truly a post-office in the Rocky Mountains is not like unto that of "Frogland Station." P. M.

Snow-Storms in Stables and Ball-Rooms.

In the city of Erzeroom, in Turkey, horses are kept in vast subterranean stables. On cold mornings, when the doors and windows are thrown open, a fall of snow sometimes occurs in these stables.

The same has sometimes happened in ball-rooms in Russia. On cold winter nights, when the doors and windows of a ball-room have been suddenly opened, in St. Petersburgh, the jewelled belles have paused in the dance to gaze in wonder at the falling snow coming down on their gorgeous attire.

This phenomenon was once inexplicable, but it is now easily explained by the scientists. Owing to the exhalations of breath, by the horses in the one case, and by the dancers in the other, the Erzeroom stable or the Russian ball-room becomes charged with aqueous vapor, which is suspended in the air, just as aqueous vapor is suspended in the out-door atmosphere before a fall of snow. On opening the doors and windows, the sudden entrance of the intense cold instantaneously congeals the vapor, and it drops to the floor in the form of snow.

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[From the North Topeka (Kansas) Times.]

We have a greater disposition to clip the New York *Ledger* all to pieces than any other paper that comes to this office. It is full of good things.

"NO ADMITTANCE."

AN ORIENTAL TALE.

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

A wealthy Syrian—Abdallah by name—
Fell ill, and died; and when his spirit came
Before the gate of Heaven, the Angel there
(Who stands with awful and majestic air
To guard the Elysian portal) softly said,
"Whence comest thou?" The Syrian bowed his head,
And answered, "From Aleppo." "Very well—
What wast thou?" asked the heavenly Sentinel.
"A merchant." "True; but tell me all the rest,"
Replied the Angel, "all—the worst and best;
From me,—reflect,—no act can be concealed!"
Whereat the merchant all his life revealed,
And nothing hid of aught that he had done;
How he had sailed beneath the Indian sun,
In quest of diamonds, and for yellow gold
To Northern Asia; how he bought and sold
By the Red Sea, and on the wondrous Nile;
And stormy Persian Gulf; and all the while
Had bravely striven to keep his conscience clear,
Though always buying cheap and selling dear,
As merchants use—"and so I throve amain,"
He said, "for many a year,—nor all vain
For public benefaction, since I gave
Freely for charity—content to save
Enough for me and mine,—a handsome store,—
And that is all."—"Nay, there is something more,"
The Angel said.—"Of thy domestic life
Thou hast not spoken—hadst thou not a wife?"
"Yes!" said the Syrian, with a sigh that spoke
Of many a groan beneath the marriage yoke.
Whereat the Angel said, "By God's rich grace,
Come in!—poor suffering soul, and take thy place
Among the martyrs—and give Heaven thanks!"
Now, as he entered the celestial ranks,
Another soul approached the golden door,
Who, having heard all that he who came before
Had spoken, and observed him entering in
The open portal, thought himself to win
Easy admittance; for when he had told
His history, like the other, he made bold
To add, "All this, Good Angel, is most true;
And, as for wives, I've had no less than two!"
"Twice married!" said the Angel, with a face
Of wrath and scorn—"Unfortunates have place
In Heaven's blest mansions—but, by Reason's rules,
(So get thee hence!) there is no room for fools!"

THE QUIDBURY MYSTERY.

BY JUDGE CLARK.

Quidbury was a dull place before it had two newspapers in it. But when the *Cudgel of Progress* shied its castor into the ring, and the *Weekly Prodder* squared off responsively next door, things took a more lively turn.

Swasher of the *Cudgel* was a bluff, portly, bull-dogish looking man, whose grizzled wig bore evidence of the frosts of some fifty winters. He had a good head, Phrenology said; but Phrenology doesn't always know the difference between brains and *rickets.* Whether he wore green goggles for weak eyes, or to hide strabismus, was nobody's business but his own.

Prickle of the *Prodder,* in person, was his rival's opposite. He was lean, lank, and wiry; had light sorrel hair, worn close cropped, and looked a trifle younger than the other.

Both came to Quidbury strangers, and about the same time. Prickle bought the *Village Cackler,* whose proprietor, after a year's experience trying to please everybody, taking his pay in approved country produce, was ready to sell out cheap. Swasher brought his materials with him.

How two papers could thrive where one had starved was a problem cautious people shook their heads over. But such had not closely studied the great law of competition, the force which makes the world move. It was not until the *Cudgel* and the *Prodder* had espoused opposite sides of every question, moral, social, and political, discussing them with an acrimonious fierceness unexampled in journalistic warfare, and people had begun to take and read the papers, much as they would have stopped to look on at a fight, that the fogies of Quidbury began to see how two newspapers might do better than one.

There is not much neutrality in human nature. There are few matters on which we are really indifferent, or on which we can witness a heated controversy without taking sides. I have known a couple of men punch each other's heads over a theory in metaphysics, and another couple come to blows over a canine combat when neither owned either of the curs.

Human nature, in Quidbury, was the average article. It only needed stirring up, and that it got. The two editors were very evenly matched. What they lacked in argument they made up by bespattering each other. They even went the length of kicking up one another's ancestral dust; Swasher averring that Prickle's great-grandfather's second cousin by marriage had been received into another if not a better world on the personal introduction of J. Ketch, Esq., and Prickle retorting that Swasher's half-aunt's uncle had been cropped as a horse-thief. The natural result followed. Quidbury was divided into two parties. A full census of the adult population might have been made from the rival subscription lists. Both publishers put money in their pockets. And more than one case of assault and battery occurred between those who had been fast friends before becoming readers of the *Cudgel* and the *Prodder.*

The wonder was how the promoters of so many broils themselves escaped collision. Threats and defiances enough were exchanged between them. When Swasher hinted, with delicate irony, at a certain natural affinity between his cotemporary's cuticle and a horse-whip, promising, ere long, to give a public demonstration of the fact, he of the *Prodder* retorted that the pot-valiant swaggerer next door had better learn to spell *able* first. But next day, when Swasher paraded the streets, armed with a six-foot cart-whip, seeking his adversary high and low, the latter was nowhere to be seen; and the day after that, when Prickle took the war-path, brandishing a bludgeon like a weaver's beam, and valorously evoking his foe to the direful conflict, the erst heroic Swasher came not, but made default. It was a strange circumstance that two men, so eager to encounter, should so long continue next-door neighbors, and not only never meet, but never both be visible at once. Nevertheless timid people predicted sanguinary consequences, if the two ever *did* come together.

Affairs came to a crisis tragic enough at last. On the eve of a local election a sub-committee-man ran up to Swasher's sanctum to urge the issue of an extra, exposing some newly discovered plot of the enemy.

Bursting into the room without knocking, the sub-committee-man was astonished at finding himself, not in the presence of the portly editor of the *Cudgel,* but in that of the gaunt proprietor of the *Prodder,* in his shirt sleeves, washing his bloody hands in Swasher's basin, a copious crimson pool on the floor adding to the horror of the scene!

"Murder!" shouted the sub-committee-man. Men rushed in, wild with excitement. Prickle, overwhelmed, exhibited all the confusion of suddenly detected guilt. He stammered a few incoherent words, but essayed no explanation of the damning circumstances. An officer was called, who hurried him off, barely in time to prevent the infliction of summary vengeance, of which ominous mutterings began to be heard.

A deep mystery enshrouded the affair. Days passed, and no sign of the body could be found. Swasher had last been seen going into his office a few minutes before the sub-committee-man entered it. That he had never gone out alive was only too apparent. But how two hundred and odd pounds of corpse could have been made away with so suddenly, leaving not a trace behind, was a query only darkened by discussion.

I appeared for Prickle at his examination. The case against him was black enough. He was either unable or unwilling to give any explanation of the facts. In our private consultations he gave evasive answers. I did the best I could, making the most of the non-discovery of the body. But the circumstances were overwhelming. Prickle's unexplained presence in the private office of his enemy, the latter's disappearance, the condition of the prisoner's hands, the pool on the floor, a portion of which had been carefully analyzed by a rising young doctor, who pronounced it human blood, and discoursed so flippantly of fibrine and albumen and corpuscles that it was easy to see he knew what he was talking about—all combined to dissipate every remaining scruple touching the prisoner's guilt, and those who had hesitated before now felt constrained to join in the general verdict.

The magistrate was about to sign the final commitment, when the prisoner rose under great excitement.

"This is all infernal nonsense!" he exclaimed.

"Silence!" admonished His Honor.

"I tell you Swasher's no more dead than I am," persisted the prisoner.

"Prove that, and it will save you a world of trouble," remarked the Squire dryly.

"Send me to his office and I'll do it," said Prickle.

The proposal seemed reasonable. The accused was conducted, under a strong guard, to his late rival's sanctum.

"Allow me to enter alone," he said; "you can watch the door and windows."

With some demurring the request was granted.

Prickle went in and closed the door. In ten minutes it was opened, and the astonished spectators saw before them, not the gaunt form of the suspected murderer, but the substantial figure of his supposed victim, and, strangest of all, it was now Prickle that was invisible!

There was so little of the ghostly in Swasher's plump appearance, that the fright which might otherwise have been occasioned by his sudden turning up, gave place to surprise and curiosity.

The account he gave, in answer to a torrent of questions, increased rather than abated the general astonishment. Sitting in his office, he said, Prickle had stolen in upon him, and, by a few mesmeric passes, had reduced him to a state of unconsciousness, out of which he had but just returned. Where he had been stowed away meanwhile, or what had become of Prickle, he knew no more than others.

Quidbury was nonplussed. The Black Art, many were found to insinuate, might not be entirely a lost one, and strong hints were given out, in Swasher circles, of the existence of relations, more intimate than creditable, between the Prickle faction and the Father of Evil.

Swasher sold out the *Cudgel* shortly after for a handsome price, and laid an attachment on the Prodder office—one of whose proprietor's old notes he had picked up somewhere—and sold out that too, as the property of an absconding debtor.

Prickle was never seen in Quidbury after Swasher's reappearance; and the latter left soon after with a snug sum in his pocket.

Last summer, at a popular watering-place, turning about in answer to a tap on the shoulder, I found myself face to face with my mysterious client.

"Glad to see you," he said; "I owe you a fee, I believe."

I modestly assented, and Mr. Prickle made matters right, expressing his regret that circumstances had prevented his doing so sooner.

I could not forbear a question or two touching the occurrences above related.

"All easily explained," he said. "You see that rascal Swasher—excuse the force of habit—and myself were one and the same person. A little padding and Swasher's wig and goggles made all the difference. The two sanctums were separated by a board partition, part of which I could remove and replace at pleasure, and so be either Swasher or Prickle as occasion might require. I had forgotten to lock the door the day that confounded sub-committee-man bolted in and played the mischief."

"But the blood?"

"Pshaw!—I had upset a bottle of red ink and got some of it on my hands. What an ass of himself that fool of a doctor made, with his Fibrine and Albumen and Corpuscles!"

SO NICE TO BE ENGAGED.

Every one must have noticed the great difference, as a general thing, between the conduct of the young betrothed man and the young betrothed woman. He, the braver and stronger of the two, is utterly confused and bashful, and seeks to make a secret of the fact. She, on the contrary, tries to parade it, is proud of it, assumes a certain air of proprietorship over him, and offers to her friends little delicate confidences as to how nice it is to be engaged, and how dreadfully jealous he is if she looks at any one else.

The cause of this is just one thing: the man is *in love;* the girl is not.

I have studied human nature, I have looked into the depths of hearts, I have made man and woman the study of my life, and I aver that the girl in love is rarer than a black rose. She simply has for her lover exactly the feeling that the young mother has for her baby. She has an anxious desire to see to him for life, to make sure that he is comfortable, that his buttons are all right, and that his food is what it ought to be. She understands that he is in love with her, and rejoices in the knowledge. The idea of losing his love is madness to her, but of herself she does not understand it.

A woman who is not selfish, and greedy, and mean, who does not smile on any one who can give her fine clothes and a grand establishment, overflows with the mother-feeling all her life. She expends it on her dolls in childhood, on her poodle, or her kitten, or her canary afterward, and, when the time comes, on her lover. Many a man would lose a great deal of his conceit and vanity if he knew just how the girl whom he supposed to be in love with him really felt. She, also, would be surprised to hear that she was not in love at all, but only delighted to have some one in love with her, and in a measure awakened to the knowledge of that love which she will some day give her children. It is the best sort of love too, and when a man's wife really loves him as his mother used to love him, she makes him happy.

But I think it is time that some one who knows the truth should tell it. A good woman's love is something to be happy in—not the fleeting gallantry that man calls by that name, but a pure and high affection, and with so much of the motherly and protecting in it, that I have often heard a little eighteen-year-old woman say of a six-footer of two hundred pounds weight, and a brigadier-general to boot:

"Oh, isn't he a darling, cunning little thing? Just as sweet as sugar!" AUNT MARY.

Sad Occurrence—A Boy Mistaken for a Bear, and Shot.

[From the Gatesville (Texas) Sun.]

A sad accident occurred within a few miles of town some days ago. Mr. Seaton was out upon the mountains hunting; his little son, eleven years old, in company. The boy had taken a haversack for the purpose of gathering grapes for his mother. The father left the son sitting in the road, by a tree, and went a short distance looking for squirrels. In the mean time another hunter, whose name we have not learned, came up, saw the little boy with the black haversack upon his back, mistook him for a bear, and sent a rifle ball through the little boy's brain.

Wives Towing Their Husbands.

[From the Ohio Miner.]

By a beautiful dispensation of Providence, whenever a poor, shiftless, good-for-nothing man is sent into this world, some active, go ahead little woman is invariably fastened to him to tow him along through, and keep his head above the water. It's for the best, of course. What would become of the poor fellow without her? At the same time she finds it a little hard.

DEAD MAN'S BROOK.

BY DR. THOMAS DUNN ENGLISH.

A black moss wraps each rotting limb
That lies beside the sluggish pool;
The thick set leaves the sunlight dim;
The place around is damp and cool.
For shadows round us, deep and brown,
Darken and chill the silent nook,
And in the water settle down—
And people call it Dead Man's Brook.

Or be the story false or true,
With all its hinted love and sin,
You feel, as you peer the thickets through,
In such a place it might have been.
For a terrible tale by the spot is told,
As something in the shadow moans,
And odors rise of graveyard mould,
And fresh shed blood, and mouldering bones.

And this the tale: One summer day
To yonder mansion tall and fair,
A pallid lady came, they say,
And asked to see the master there.
She would not enter there, she said,
So down he came at her behest;
And over his face a terror spread,
When first he saw the lady guest.

Gray as ashes his face became,
But hers was cold and stern as fate;
His eyes were dimmed by grief and shame,
But hers were lit by woe and hate.
She raised her hand, but spoke no word,
Then turned and to this thicket sped;
He followed over the rocky ground,
With troubled look and hurrying tread.

And so they melted from the gaze
Of lackeys who beheld the scene,
And looked on both with strange amaze,
And wondered what it all might mean.
For his return they waited there
For hours, and all that summer day,
Until his wife, so young and fair,
Wondered what kept her lord away.

Night came at last, yet he came not,
And morning followed; then in fear
They sought for him in every spot,
And one stray seeker entered here.
His cry alarmed the rest, who sped
And joined their fellow in this nook;
And what they saw of live and dead
Henceforth gave title to the brook.

Beneath this beech whose drooping limb
Dipped in the water, were the two;
The ghastly breast wound made in him
Showed where his life went ebbing through.
Upon her lap his head was laid;
A dagger in one hand she kept;
The other with his long locks played,
Or o'er his pallid features crept.

Up looked she then, and proudly said,
"You seek him? He is mine—and here!"
"Woman!" they cried, in tones of dread,
"Why have you done this deed of fear?"
"Father and mother and child are one—
Love's own trinity they," said she;
"But he is false, and I undone,
And we die together—we three! we three!"

Quicker than they to grasp, her stroke
Fatally fell on her troubled breast;
And a heart by crime and sorrow broke
Suddenly gave its pulses rest.
Or whence she came, or the name she bore,
None knew, and it never yet was known;
But they buried her here when the day was o'er,
And her grave has neither stake nor stone.

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A FATAL INHERITANCE.

By ELIZA A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF THE "EVIL GENIUS," THE "WHITE TERROR," THE "RIVAL SISTERS," ETC.

PART I.

CHAPTER V.

A SCENE OF VIOLENCE.

The road wound through the magnificent southern forest, where the superb oaks and the shining foliage of the magnolia contrasted with the tall pines, which arose straight as a shaft without branches till they towered high above in the sunshine of heaven.

Vistas of rare beauty opened at every turn in the winding road, lighted up by the last beams of the setting sun. The soft evening air swayed to and fro the long pendants of Spanish moss which hung from the spreading arms of the trees, and the perfume of the yellow jasmine, growing wild in every direction, filled the air with its sweetness.

At the moment Alice Layton was scarcely conscious of this, but from that evening the same odor, however faintly breathed, caused her to grow sick and giddy, for it brought back to her all the bitter humiliation and suffering of that hour.

Driven from her husband's house with but a pittance on which to support herself and her child; compelled to appeal to her father for protection and shelter, for at least a season, Alice bitterly felt that the only refuge open to her in her present desolation was one in which she would meet with but a cold welcome.

Her father was entirely under the influence of her step-mother, a hard-hearted, narrow-minded woman, who had been mainly instrumental in making the marriage from which she had so keenly suffered; and Alice knew that her return to the parental roof so poorly provided for, and also with the incumbrance of a child, would be considered by Mrs. Snowden as an almost unpardonable offence.

Alice tried to put these thoughts from her, and to feel thankful that she had been permitted to escape from her thraldom bearing her heart's darling with her, but they would return in spite of all her efforts to exorcise them.

She was a proud woman, fond of society, as young and sprightly women always are, and she acknowledged to herself, with a feeling of condemnation, that in accepting Edward Layton, she had been unduly swayed by the brilliant position to which she was told he could elevate her.

Her punishment had been bitter enough, for she had been deprived of every enjoyment suited to one of her years, and had found herself, almost from the first, an object of contemptuous scorn to the man who had so eagerly wooed her. She recalled her last interview with Crimin, and tried to trust to the promises he made, but deep in her very being was implanted mistrust of that false nature, and she looked down on her sleeping child with the conviction that the inheritance to which Lucia was born would be wrested from her, to be given to the base enemy who had wrought the ruin in which he was now exulting.

As the sun disappeared, the moon arose in serene beauty, flooding the sylvan scenery with its soft light, and the air grew sensibly cooler. They were approaching the Ashley river, near which the mansion of Dr. Bland was situated.

The winding stream soon came in sight, the waters glittering in the reflected light of moon and stars, which also shone on many stately homes embowered in trees, in most of which Alice had been welcomed as a guest. Now it seemed to her as if ages had passed since those early days of her married life. The brief sunshine did not last long, and when it settled down in darkness she relinquished the society in which she could no longer appear without displaying before the world the indignities to which she was subjected. Better solitude than that; so she accepted her lot in all its dreariness, and asked for strength to bear alone the heavy burden that had been laid on her young shoulders.

A latch clicked, a gate flew open, and the carriage entered a wide sweep which led to the entrance of an old-fashioned country house, a story and a half high, with dormer windows in the roof, and a wide gallery extending across the entire front.

There was a wealth of shade and flowers, and large vases stood on either side of the steps, in which grew tropical plants sheltered from cold by a couple of young magnolia trees, with boughs interlaced, forming a verdant arch above the entrance.

Dr. Bland had sent a boy over from Layton with a brief note to his wife, which had puzzled more than enlightened her as to what had happened there, and who was to be her guest. He had scribbled on a scrap of paper torn from his note-book:

"The mischief's to pay here—can't explain on paper. Get rooms ready, and wait supper. I am going to bring you somebody to coddle and comfort. P. B."

As Mrs. Bland was always ready to comfort any one who needed her ministrations, she hastened to have her best guest-chamber prepared for the expected visitor, and ordered the cook to keep back the evening meal till the doctor returned.

She was now standing on the gallery, a motherly looking woman, very neatly, though plainly dressed. Her hair was white, but her brow was smooth, and her eyes soft and bright as in youth.

Alice, in her pride, had held herself aloof from others, but this warm-hearted woman had refused to be repelled, and her unobtrusive sympathy had found its way to the heart of the helpless creature she had so yearned to aid in every possible way.

Mrs. Bland continued to visit her when others dropped away, and occasionally Alice spent a day with her, when she was petted and made much of, but never from her reticent lips had fallen a single complaint of the husband under whose roof she continued to live.

Until this day she had never referred to her trials to Dr. Bland, though he, as the family physician, knew enough of them to amaze him at her silent endurance of treatment which would have driven most women wild with fury or despair.

The child, still sleeping, was carefully lifted on the small bed on which she reclined, and taken into a large room, the windows of which opened to the gallery floor, and Alice, with steps from which all elasticity was gone, slowly approached the friend whose arms were opened to welcome her.

As they closed around her, the calmness she had striven to maintain forsook her, and her head fell on the maternal breast, while sobs convulsed her frame.

Mrs. Bland held her in her clasp in silence a few moments, allowing this first burst of emotion to subside before she spoke. She then said, in gentle tones:

"There, dear, you are calmer now. I know—I understand all that is necessary, so don't attempt to explain. I am to be a mother to you as long as I can induce you to stay with us, and the doctor is to keep you from all harm. You see I take hold of the situation at once. Come in now, and take off your things, and we'll soon have a cup of the tea you praised so much the last time you were here."

Alice controlled herself by this time, and she lifted her head and said:

"I am afraid I have come hither, dear Mrs. Bland, only to cause trouble to your good husband and yourself. I had no other refuge at this late hour, or, believe me, I would never have exposed such good friends to the anger of—of—him who has sent me from him. I am a rejected wife, Mrs. Bland. Many would think my life blighted and disgraced, but I do not think I shall die of a broken heart as long as I have my Lucia to console me."

"Has anything happened to the little darling? I saw that her hand was bandaged."

"She has been badly hurt; the doctor will tell you the particulars. I cannot speak of them. Shall we go in now and see how she is getting on? She is stupefied with a narcotic, and has slept all the way. She is but a poor little waif now, Mrs. Bland—she is no longer the heiress of Layton, but a cast off and disinherited child."

"Oh, my dear, she'll come to her own yet, in spite of all the efforts that may be made to keep her out of it; mark my words. She may have tribulations to go through, as all the rest of us have, but she'll come out right, be sure of that; so don't let yourself get downhearted."

"Ah, if I could only think you a true prophet," sighed the pale mother; "but I will try to believe that the good angel that we are assured always watches over little children will preserve her from harm, and give to her all that is necessary to her future welfare."

"We are all in God's hand, my child, and if we trust him, He will fulfill his promise to care for us. Go to him with your troubles, and He will surely find you a way out of them."

Alice gratefully pressed the hand of her kind comforter, and together they entered the room to which the sleeping child had been taken.

A few moments later the supper bell sounded, and Mrs. Layton left Lucia with her nurse and went out with her hostess, glad to accept the refreshment of a cup of tea, though she could eat nothing.

Everything about the house bore the impress of neatness and taste, though it was evident that nothing had been bought for show. The furniture was old-fashioned, but handsome, and well kept, and the table was exquisitely served.

The only child left at home was a boy eleven years old, the Benjamin of the little flock that had grown up beneath that peaceful roof, and gone out in the world to make it a nobler and a better place for the training they had received at home.

Two sons were settled in life, one as a physician, the other as a lawyer; and the only daughter had been two years married to a former student of her father, who had settled in Charleston.

Philip Bland was a bright, handsome lad, gifted with more than average ability, his father thought, and it was Dr. Bland's intention to send him to Germany when he was old enough, to devote himself to the study of science and the modern languages.

Philip had been a frequent visitor at Layton, and he was a favorite not only with the down-trodden mistress of the place, but with her husband and his cousin. The frank, outspoken, yet well-bred lad was always welcome to the two dissipated men when not in one of their orgies, but Philip rarely troubled them with his presence. His visits were usually made when he knew Mrs. Layton was to be found in her sylvan temple beneath the great oak, and the companionship of this young boy had been a great solace to her in times of greatest trouble to her. He saw and understood, but with rare prudence at his age, commented on nothing that became known to him.

When Alice entered the spacious dining-room, he only showed his sympathy by taking her hand and pressing it tenderly between his own, as he said:

"Dear Mrs. Layton, how glad we all are to have you and darling little Lucia here."

She kissed his brow, and faintly said:

"Thank you, Philip. You and your good parents do indeed make me feel as if I am not entirely desolate."

When they arose from the table Mrs. Bland took the arm of her guest, and said:

"You look quite broken down, my child. You must retire at once, and the doctor will prepare a composing draught for you that will settle your nerves and give you some sleep."

They found Cassy sitting beside the child with a face that was not only contented, but would have been radiantly happy but for her respect for the great trouble into which her mistress had fallen. To get back to the old home from which she had been taken four years back and given to her young lady as a waiting maid, had long been the most yearning desire of Cassy's heart; and after the first shock was over of knowing that Mrs. Layton must give up the grand home with all its stately appendages, the woman philosophically concluded that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and accepted the change as the most welcome thing that could happen to herself.

Cassy arose, and said:

"The baby queen is gettin' 'long mighty well, Miss Ally. 'Twon't be long afore we can git away from here wi' her."

"She is but a discrowned queen now, Cassy, but we will try to make her good and happy, in spite of the change in her fortunes," said Mrs. Layton, with an effort to speak hopefully. "You can go now, and I will remain with Lucia."

The child had been undressed, and everything Alice would herself need for the night had been left out by the deft handmaiden, and Cassy went to join the servants of the family at their supper, and have the pleasure of producing a great sensation among them by describing the violent scenes which had passed at Layton that afternoon.

She had no longer any fear of her late master, for she had made up her mind that the separation between him and his wife was final, and as she was Miss Ally's property, Layton could have no further power over her in any way. Cassy was by no means reticent, and the wide eyes and open mouths that surrounded her as she talked on of all *she* and her mistress had suffered, afforded her the gratification, so dear to one of her race, of knowing that she had produced an electrical effect upon her simple audience.

Mrs. Bland did not leave her guest till she had fallen into a light slumber, and then she went to join her husband and learn all that had taken place that afternoon at Layton.

She weighed the facts in her clear mind, and then said:

"I think Alice was right to avail herself of the opportunity to escape from that wretched man. She must never go back to him, Doctor, even if he should wish it. After what you have told me, neither she nor her child would be safe under that roof. Do you suppose that Mr. Layton will attempt to interfere with her after ordering her to leave his house?"

"There is no telling what a man maddened by drink may or may not do. There are two witnesses to prove that he surrendered the child to her, and Lucia shall not be taken from her if I can prevent it."

"Oh, dear, I hope he'll not come here making us all uncomfortable, and may be threatening you for befriending his unfortunate wife."

"I think I can stand his threats; and if he comes, he'll hardly do more than bluster. It is getting late, old lady, and I think I'll go to sleep now, to be fresh and ready for what may happen in the morning."

In spite of the excitement and suffering through which Alice had passed, she slept fitfully through the greater portion of the night, though she woke more than once with a start, and gathered her child more closely to her breast, feeling consoled for all the evils of her lot by the certainty that her darling was safe in her arms.

It was well for her that she obtained some hours of uninterrupted repose, for she awoke to new trials which tasked all her strength of mind and body.

Soon after daylight, a violent knocking was heard at the entrance of the house, and on going out to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, Dr. Bland found Layton on the gallery comparatively sober, but evidently in a state of angry excitement.

"So-o," he exclaimed, as soon as the doctor appeared, "you have set yourself up in opposition to me, though you have called yourself the friend of my family, and attended me in all my ailments since I was a little lad. Do you think it the part of a friend to steal a man's wife and child from him when he wasn't in a condition to defend his right to them? Answer me that, if you can, Phil. Bland."

"I think I have proved myself a friend to all parties concerned, Mr. Layton, by giving shelter to those you turned out of your own house. If I had not done so, your wife must have taken refuge in one of the negro cabins, and that would have been an indelible disgrace to you."

"Pooh! there was no need that Alice should leave the house at all, and she knew it very well. I have come for my wife and child, and the carriage will soon be here that is to take them back to their lawful home."

"Very well, sir; I will speak to Mrs. Layton, and she must decide as to what she will do. If she prefers to remain here, I shall protect her even against you, for I was present when you ordered her to leave your house; I witnessed your violence toward her, and I do not think she will be safe under your roof."

Layton grew purple with rage. He clenched his fist and shook it at Dr. Bland, hissing through his shut teeth:

"If you were not an old man I would throttle you where you stand. Where is Alice? I will see her, and if she refuses to go back with me, I will at least take my child away with me. I do not suppose any one will dare to dispute my right to do that."

"I think I shall even do that, Mr. Layton. You gave up the child to her mother, as your cousin can testify as well as myself. No court would give to a man of your habits the control of a baby girl, as you well know. If Mrs. Layton refuses to go back with you, Lucia remains with her."

"This—*this* to *me!*" cried Layton, in a choking voice. "How dare you assume control of my wife and child? They are my property; no one has the right to interfere between us, and you will do it at your peril."

"I am not easily frightened by threats, Mr. Layton. I advise you not to attempt any violence, sir, for you will not escape scatheless if you do. My business is to cure, not to kill; but I can wield as deadly a weapon as you can, and I have taken the precaution to arm myself, in anticipation of a scene with you."

Layton had raised his hand to his bosom in a threatening attitude, but at this assurance from Dr. Bland he withdrew it, and with a hard laugh, said:

"It would be a foolish thing for you and me to go to popping pistols at each other for so worthless a creature as a runaway wife. If mine chooses to leave me, I am sure I shall not try to force her back. She may choose the destiny of her child. If she takes her away from me, I swear by everything that is most sacred to *her*, that I will not only disinherit the brat, but I will make such a will as she will shiver to hear read. I am in deadly earnest now, and you will all find out yet of what such a man as I am is capable, when he has been insulted and outraged in this fashion."

The flush on his face had faded into sudden pallor, and in his eyes there was an expression of vindictive purpose which seemed to Dr. Bland more to be dreaded than his threats. He said:

"I scarcely think that Mrs. Layton will consent to see you; but if you will come in, and wait a few moments, I will report to you her decision."

"Thank you—no. I do not wish to enter your house. I will sit here till you return;" and he threw himself into a chair near the entrance.

"Tell Alice what I have said concerning the child. Let her fully understand that the future fate of Lucia is at stake. I will disown her—I will do worse than that, if her mother takes her from me."

There was no need to repeat to the trembling wife what he had said, for the first sound at the door had aroused her to the certainty that her husband was there; that he had come to tear her from her asylum, if he found it possible to do so, and her heart died within her at the possibilities her imagination evoked.

She sprang up, hastily dressed herself, standing near enough to the window to hear every word spoken on the gallery, and when Dr. Bland came to her door and tapped on it, she opened it herself, looking pale, but perfectly self-possessed.

"I heard it all, and my course is taken," she said, in low tones. "I cannot see him. Where would be the use? He would only insult me again, and I have borne enough at his hands. Let him do his worst. I will save my child from falling into James Crimin's power. Not long would she live to enjoy her father's wealth, even if it was bequeathed to her. He can do no worse than disinherit her."

"You heard his threats then? He is calmer outwardly than I expected to see him, but there is beneath the surface a raging demon that will not be appeased without taking some dire vengeance on you for your contumacy. I do not advise you to see him, for there is no knowing what such a man might do in a moment of insane passion."

Alice shivered, but she spoke calmly:

"Mr. Layton has forfeited all claim on me, and I wish him to understand clearly that no power on earth shall induce me to return to him, or to surrender my child. I will defend her from him to the last, and sooner die with her than give her up."

Alice stood just within her chamber, and Dr. Bland with his back to the front entrance; neither was aware that Layton had risen from his seat and made a few steps in the hall, that he might hear what was said on either side. As she uttered her last words, he strode rapidly toward the door, and thundering out, "Die then!" he fired a pistol full at her head. Alice fell to the floor. Rushing feet came flying in every direction. Cassy snatched up the shrieking child and hurried through an adjoining apartment, hoping to find some place of concealment for Lucia in which her father could not find her.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT.

Dr. Bland lifted Mrs. Layton from the floor, and her husband pressed through the frightened group that had gathered around her, anxious to ascertain if his murderous purpose had actually been carried into effect. If so, he was alarmed for the consequences to himself.

Fortunately his hand was unsteady; the ball whistled so close to her head that the concussion and the fright together caused Alice to fall into a swoon, which lasted so long that Dr. Bland began to fear she would never revive.

When Layton saw that his wife was not wounded, he strode past those who were trying to restore her, and entered the room in which he expected to find the child. One glance around showed him that the nest was vacant, and with an oath he tried the door of communication with the next room, but found it locked on the other side. It would have availed him little if he could have passed through, for Cassy had effected her escape to Mrs. Bland's room on the opposite side of the house, into which she had securely locked herself, and was then hushing the cries of the frightened child, that her father might not be guided by them to the place of her concealment.

Finding himself baffled, Layton came striding back just as his wife began to show some signs of returning consciousness. He paused, and looked down on her death-like face, and the doctor placed himself between them, as he sternly said:

"This is no place for you, Edward Layton. You have disgraced your manhood by firing on a defenceless woman, besides violating the sanctity of my roof. Leave my house, sir, at once, and never attempt to set your foot in it again."

"You and your house, and that woman there who was once my wife, may go to Hades together for all I care. Give me back my daughter, and I will go fast enough, with no thought of ever returning to this old humdrum castle again. Where is Lucia and her nurse? I shall take them both away with me, that I may pay out Madam Cas for daring to run off and hide my child from me."

"You will take *neither* from *my* house," said Dr. Bland firmly. "There is the door, Mr. Layton, and your best course is to walk out of it without further parley. You know of old that when I say a thing, I mean it. If you do not leave without further disturbance, I will have you arrested for the attempt to kill your wife."

"I'll not go till Lucia is given up to me. That is my ultimatum. If I *am* arrested, I can easily give bail, and my runaway wife will hardly have the courage to appear as my accuser. I say, old fellow, hand over the young one now, and I—I'll make a handsome settlement on her mother. I'm not going to let the world say that I allowed my recreant wife to rob me of my daughter. She is a great heiress, and I am the guardian of her person, as well as of her rights."

"You are not fit to be guardian to yourself," said the old gentleman, in a tone of disgust. "I do not wish to have another unseemly fracas in my house, Mr. Layton, but if you refuse to go out of it, I must take such measures as will force you to do so. As a gentleman, you should not require to be told when your presence is not welcome."

"Ah, bah! old sobersides; what do I care for your talk? It goes in at one ear and out at the other, as I used to be told about reproofs when I was a boy;" and he sat down on a chair facing the sofa on which Alice had been placed. Pointing at her limp figure with an expression of contemptuous scorn, he went on:

"I'll stop here till *she* regains sense enough to understand that I'll have the child, or I'll make her life a terror to her through fears for Lucia's safety. I'll do it, by ——! If *I* can't get possession of my daughter, I'll make *her* afraid to keep her near herself."

Mrs. Bland had been using every means to restore Alice from the dead faint in which she lay, and she now turned indignantly toward Layton, and said:

"You are a bad, bad man, and unfit to claim either wife or child, Edward Layton. If my husband could be induced to give them up to you, *I* would refuse to surrender either of them to such a wretch as you have proved yourself to-day. Go away from here, and leave this poor child to be looked after by those who care for her much more than you do."

"I dare say, old lade," was the scoffing reply. "Anybody may care for *her* that chooses, or she may die in a ditch for all I care; but I will have my daughter. If I do go, it will be to bring back with me those who shall be authorized to search your premises and seize on the child you are illegally withholding from her own father."

At this moment a noise was heard at the door, and Crimin came hurriedly forward, looking excited and annoyed. He glanced at the pallid from of Alice, and grew perceptibly paler as he asked:

"What has happened here? I hope you have not killed your wife, Ned. I came after you as soon as I heard whither you had gone, but I fear I am too late. Is—is Alice dead?"

"Not unless she dies from fright when she awakes from her swoon and finds Layton here," said Dr. Bland bluntly. "Your precious cousin attempted to take her life, but his unsteady hand saved her. Remove him from this place, Mr. Crimin, for my forbearance will not last much longer."

"If I had been aware of his intention, I would have prevented him from coming here to annoy her," said Crimin, approaching his cousin and laying his hand upon his arm.

"Come, Ned; you know this is worse than useless. You can gain nothing by such unmanly violence. You promised me last night that you would allow Alice to go to her father, and take her child with her for the present. At a future day you can make good your claim to Lucia, but not while she is yet a baby."

The touch of Crimin, the glance of his eyes into those of Layton, seemed to possess some magnetic power to control him. He arose at once, and with a singular change in his voice, said:

"I did not intend to hurt Alice when I left home. I had no idea she would refuse to go back with me, when I came after her myself. But she defied me; she declared she would not see me, and I forced myself into her presence, and—and—well, I shot at her, but I am glad I did not kill her. I want her to live now, that she may die at last of the slow torture I will inflict upon her. I know that I shall not live myself to triumph over her by tearing Lucia from her, but before I go I will find means to make her afraid to keep the child with herself. If *I* cannot have her, *she* shall not."

"This is nonsense, you know, Ned. Such threats are but idle breath, and you are good for many a long year yet. Let us go now, before Alice regains consciousness. I came over in the carriage you ordered to follow you, and we can return together in it."

As if unable to resist the subtle influence of this man's presence, Layton arose, and with a fearful oath, said:

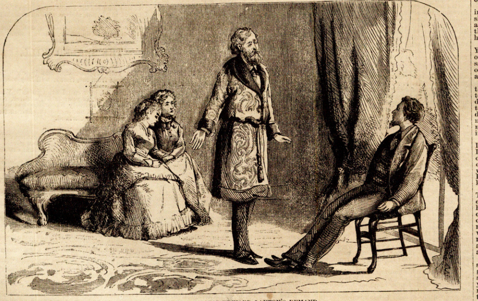
"I'll go, since nothing is to be gained by staying, but I'll send a search warrant for my daughter, and if she is not forthcoming, the vengeance I'll take on both her and her mother shall strike them, even from my grave."

Without one backward glance toward the pallid figure lying on the sofa, he took Crimin's arm, and together they went out.

A few moments later the latter came back, and hurriedly said:

"I am sorry for this disturbance, Dr. Bland, and if I had not overslept myself this morning, it should not have occurred. If I can, I will prevent any further annoyance to you and to your unhappy guest; but it will be best for Lucia to be removed to some safe asylum, before measures can be taken to gain possession of her. A word to the wise, you know. I must go now, or my unruly charge will be rushing back upon us. I can only control him as madmen are managed, by the power of my eyes. Good-morning. I know that you and Mrs. Bland will do all that is possible for that poor girl yonder."

The voice of Layton was heard calling loudly on Crimin's name, and he hastened away, after seizing the hand of Alice and feeling



DR. BLAND REFUSING EDWARD LAYTON'S DEMAND.

her pulse. It was beating faintly, and a few moments later she unclosed her eyes and looked vaguely around her.

"What has happened to me?" she asked presently. "I feel stunned and bewildered."

"Never mind now, dear; you are coming around nicely now," said Mrs. Bland's gentle voice. "You will soon be all right."

"But how did I come to faint? Such a thing never happened to me before in my life. Oh-h-h! I remember all now," and with a wild cry she started up.

"My child! my child! where is she? What has been done with her? Oh, if you have let her be taken from me I shall die!—I shall die!"

"Your child is safe; she is here, and Mr. Crimin has taken your husband away with him. Calm yourself, my dear child, for you have need of all your strength for what you must do to-day," said Dr. Bland, with gentle firmness.

"My *husband!*" repeated Alice, sinking back with a shiver. "Ah, what a mockery to call him such! He is my most deadly enemy, though he swore before Heaven to love and cherish me. He has treated me as if I were of less value than the dirt under his feet, and now he has attempted to kill me. It was a terrible day for me when I was given over to his mercy."

"You must not think of all that now, my dear. It is necessary for you to rouse yourself to the performance of the duties that lie before you. I would spare you if I could, and let you rest after the shock you have received this morning, but the child must be taken where she cannot be found, and I know that you will never consent to lose sight of her."

Alice lifted herself from her reclining position, and with terrified eyes asked:

"Are we not safe here? Will he violate his promise, and try to remove Lucia from me by force?"

The doctor nodded.

She arose instantly, a faint color coming back to her cheeks, and with sudden energy said:

"I am well again. I am strong to defy even fate itself in defence of my darling. What shall I do? Where shall I go, Doctor, to be safe from the pursuit of that man?"

"We must settle that after breakfast. Do not get into a flutter, my child, because there is no need of it. We are in the country, you know, and Layton will not be able to get to a magistrate under two hours. It will take the men sent to search the place as many more to find their way here, and we may safely calculate on such delays as Crimin can throw in his way. I give them five hours, and in that time you can be far enough away to baffle every attempt to overtake you."

"But how am I to go? What am I to do, with no one but Cassy for a companion, and I have never taken a journey without an escort in my life? I cannot expect you to leave your duties on my account, Doctor, yet I fear that I shall prove a very helpless traveller."

"Oh, no, you will not. You have energy and nerve enough for anything, when they are once fairly aroused. Besides, you are not going without an escort. I shall send Philip with you, and he has acted more than once as squire of dames. The lad has an old head on young shoulders, and he will not leave you till you are safe on the steamer at Charleston."

"Will it not be best to go by the railway? I know that Philip will do all he can for me, but the sooner I get to my father the better for me."

"You forget that your husband can telegraph, and have you stopped on the way. The steamer will be the safest for you, though it will take you longer to get to Snowden than by the train."

"I will do as you think best, Doctor, and I can never be grateful enough for the protection and kindness you have extended to me. I will go now, and begin my preparations for leaving."

"Breakfast will be ready in half an hour," said Mrs. Bland, "and when that is over we will get you off as soon as possible. You had better put on a dark travelling dress at once, and pack such things in one trunk as you will need, leaving the others to be sent on by express."

"Dear friend, you think of everything. I will go at once and attend to what is necessary."

Alice found Cassy in her room, with the child already dressed, and after her mother had cried over her a few moments she was taken out to Dr. Bland, that he might re-arrange the bandages on her arm. Lucia seemed to be suffering little from it, though she fretted at having her hand tied up. Cassy was sent back to assist her mistress, and by the time breakfast was announced the transfer of clothing had been made, and Mrs. Layton had exchanged her morning wrapper for a dress suitable for travelling.

There was a boat-house at the edge of the river which sheltered a stanch boat in which Philip was learning to row, but on this morning it was manned by two stalwart negro men, whose skill and strength would enable them to baffle pursuit, even if such a thing was attempted.

Before parting from her guest, Mrs. Bland said, in her tenderest and most impressive manner:

"If you ever need a friend or a home, my dear, come to us, and you will find both. The doctor and I have talked it over, and we would be glad and happy if we could keep you always with us. We are lonely since Emily married and left us, and it will not be many years before Philip too must be sent out in the world, to prepare himself for the career for which he is designed. If you could come back to us and be our daughter, we should be far better reconciled to the empty nest from which our own young birds have flown."

Alice threw herself in her arms, and with many tears, said:

"I would gladly stay now, and be a daughter to you, but inexorable fate forbids it. I thank you from my heart of heart, Mrs. Bland, for your maternal kindness to me, and if I need aid or shelter, be sure that to you and your kind husband will I turn in my desolation, in preference to any others. When I am safe at Snowden, I will write and let you know; and—and—will you keep me informed of what is going on here?"

The promise to write occasionally was given, and after a kind farewell from the doctor, the travellers took their places in the comfortable boat, and set out to a landing eight miles below, where a steam packet stopped at mid-day to take on passengers and freight for Charleston.

The seats in the stern of the boat were cushioned, and shaded by an awning, and had the heart of the harassed fugitive been at peace she would have enjoyed the lovely scenery on the banks of the river, the bright sunshine that flashed and glittered on the water, and the soft breeze, bearing on its wings the perfumes wafted from myriads of wild flowers blooming in the forest over which it had lately swept.

Philip, with intuitive tact, did not attempt to divert Mrs. Layton's mind from dwelling on the sad thoughts which must fill it after what she had lately gone through. He left her to think over and arrange her future plans, while he devoted himself to the amusement of Lucia, and as they floated down the shining river the laugh of the little girl often rang out over its waters, proving how successful the lad was in his efforts to please her.

At length Alice aroused herself from her painful reveries, and smiled to see on what good terms the children were. She took Philip's hand in her own, and said:

"What a darling fellow you are, Philip! and you must be really good, you know, to make a baby like that love you so much. Children read faces better than grown people, I have read somewhere."

"I am not always good," replied the lad, shaking his head. "I felt very bad this morning, and if I had had a pistol, I believe I should have popped away at somebody myself; meaning to kill him too, if I could."

Alice shuddered, and vailed her face with her hands.

"Don't—don't refer to that; it makes me heart-sick.

"You must not resent what I suffer, Philip," she presently added, with a faint smile, "because the one who treated me badly is Lucia's father. You know that I have given her to you as your little wife, and you must be lenient in your judgment of one so nearly related to your baby love."

The boy tightened his clasp around the little form that sat on his knee, and his fine face flushed as he looked up at the speaker, and earnestly said:

"If I had had time for thought, I would not have felt like hurting Lucia's father, shamefully as he had treated you. I know it was only a piece of fun when you gave me Lucia for my future wife, but I mean it to be turned to earnest some of these days. I love my little pet now, and when she 's grown up she'll be a sweeter darling than she is even now; and I am going to work hard, and grow into an intelligent and a *good* man, to be worthy to ask God to give her to me some day really for my wife. I hope you won't go back on me *then*, Mrs. Layton, and say that you were not in earnest. Would you, now?"

Alice was touched, interested, and amused.

"I certainly would sooner accept you for my son, Philip, than any one else in the wide world; but this is all nonsense, you know. You will soon forget all about Lucia, now that she is to be taken so far away from you, and she is such a baby she will never be able to recall you to her memory when you have been away from her a few months. Should fate throw you together in after-life, and you take a fancy to each other, why—then we might make a contract that would have some chance of being fulfilled."

"But I am not going to forget her," said the lad eagerly. "I have that beautiful picture of her that you were so kind as to have taken for me, and I am going to have one of myself to send to her before I go to Germany. She will be old enough then to—to care about it, perhaps. You must not let her forget me, Mrs. Layton."

"I shall be sure to talk to her a great deal about you and your good parents, Philip, and to awake in her heart grateful and tender feelings to you all, for you have been good friends to me."

Philip sat silently meditating a few moments, and then, with a deep breath, said:

"That is all you can do, of course; and if my little darling does not quite forget me, I shall be satisfied. See, I always carry this about me, and I don't mean to part from it as long as I live."

He drew from his bosom a small gold locket which opened with a spring, and was secured to his neck by a slender black cord. A touch of his finger caused the case to fly open, and an exquisitely colored head, surrounded by radiant clouds, was seen. It was a perfect miniature of the little lady on his knees; and Lucia snatched at it with her right hand, saying:

"Dat me—baby; gib me, Philly. Putty ba—"

"Yes, it's you, you darling little puss; but it belongs to me, and you can't have it."

Lucia put up her lips to kiss him, as that was her usual manner of getting her own way where Philip was concerned, but he diverted her from her purpose by giving her a flower from his button-hole, and setting her to launching the petals one by one on the silvery tide they were speeding over now with rapid strokes, while the rowers crooned a low-toned boating song, keeping time with their oars.

Tears came into the eyes of the deeply tried young mother, as she looked on the two fair young faces, and she would have given much to be able to pierce the mists of years, and assure herself that her child would find so peaceful a haven in the future as the love of such a man as Philip Bland must make would be to her.

She kissed the little face, and closing the case, softly said:

"I will pray to the All-Father, Philip, that we may be all brought together again in peace and safety, and if it will be well for you both, that fate may yet link you and my darling together in such tender union as alone can hallow the marriage vow."

The lad's face grew radiant, and he silently lifted her hand to his lips.

A few moments later they turned a bend in the river, and the landing was in sight.

It was simply a wooden platform built at the edge of the bank, with a long cotton shed a few feet above it; a small shanty stood at one end of this, in which lived an Irishman who guarded the safety of the bales left there till the boat called for them. A wooden bench under the shadow of cotton-wood trees stood a little distance back from the landing, and on this Philip seated Mrs. Layton; Cassy followed with the child; and he then returned to the boat to have the luggage placed on the platform, and to get a basket of food which his mother had thoughtfully put up, lest the steamer should be behind her time.

The men were then sent back, with stringent orders to communicate with no one on the way, and to avoid meeting any other boat by rowing in to the shore if they saw one approaching them from above.

The steamer was delayed more than an hour, and our little party began to feel very uneasy, lest time should be afforded their enemies to come in pursuit of them. Philip beguiled the tedious delay by spreading out the delicacies the basket contained, and chattering on every subject that he thought could interest or amuse those he had in charge.

At length a dark cloud of smoke was seen rising against the clear blue of the sky, and in a few moments the boat came in sight. As she came ploughing through the waves, a signal was made to her that freight and passengers awaited her, and she rounded to, and in half an hour our travellers were safely on their way to Charleston.

When she entered the cabin, Mrs. Layton glanced around apprehensively, fearing that among the passengers she might recognize acquaintances, who would be curious to find out why she was going away from her home under the escort of so young a boy as Philip Bland. But fortunately all on board were strangers to her, and composure began to return to her when she felt the waves bounding beneath the swift steamer, and knew that every revolution of the wheels bore her further away from the husband who had become a terror and a horror to her.

By a lucky chance, the steamer that left for Baltimore twice each week was making ready to start when the *Palmetto* came in, and Philip went at once on board of her and secured a state-room for Mrs. Layton. He placed her under the protection of the captain, and exacted from him a promise to see her safely on the train when they reached Baltimore; a few hours would then take her to her father's house, where she would at least have protection from the violence of her husband.

At the last moment poor Alice wept in utter desolation, and clung to Philip as if she felt that her last stay was deserting her. The baby too, with her one available hand clenched in his dark curls, roared in sympathy with her mother's distress.

Philip at last released himself, saying in a choked voice:

"I'll wait till I see you safe from the landing, Mrs. Layton, and then go to my sister. God bless you! We'll meet again some day in happiness, I do believe."

The lad shook hands with Cassy, and then ran down the gangway, and stood watching the boat till it diminished to a speck in the distance.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—It is often better to have a great deal of harm happen to one. A great deal may arouse you to remove what a little will only accustom you to endure.

A HALF HOUR'S RIDE.

BY M. L. D.

I was never in my life a flirt, or at all inclined to play the coquette; so when Dan. Hanton asked me to marry him, it gave me real pain to refuse. He was a handsome fellow, most of the girls thought, and rather envied me his attention; but somehow, though not naturally timid, I shrank from his bold eyes, coarse manners, and more than all, when he spoke to me, from his hot breath filled with the fumes of liquor. I think if young men only knew how disgusting a thing this is to a woman, they would abstain from drinking, at *least* when they are coming into her presence. My father always called me his "little lady," and petted and spoiled me for my dead mother's sake, and had I loved Dan. I know he would not have opposed our marriage. Still I could not help seeing the satisfaction in his eyes when I told him that I had refused him.

"Well, my girl," he said, "there be some who say Dan. would be a good match for you, seeing as how he is engineer on a train, and I nothing more than a baggage-master; but I think different, and don't feel a bit sorry to keep you a spell longer, though I fear it will only be a spell, after all, for I've seen William Dean, that good-looking chap in the telegraph office, casting 'sheep's eyes' at you, and I suppose he will be asking you next."

And in this, by the way, father was right.

I had just finished my work the next morning, when a knock came to the door, and when I opened it I was quite surprised to find Dan. standing there, for he had gone off in such a violent passion at my refusal that I scarcely expected to see him again; but I tried to hide my astonishment, and said, as pleasantly as I knew how:

"Come in, Dan."

He came in, shuffling his feet, and twirling his hat in his hands. I had certainly never seen him appear to worse advantage.

"I just came over," he said, "to tell you that I'm sorry for my bad manners last night, and I hope you won't lay it up against me, for a fellow can't always hold his tongue when he gets such a slap 'cross the head, as it were, and I've been thinking if I couldn't do something for you, to kind of make up for it; so I remembered how you had always wanted to take a ride on the engine, and as I've got to run her down to Western station before I take my afternoon trip, I thought I'd step in and see if you didn't want to go along."

I was delighted. All my life I had longed to ride on a locomotive, especially one unincumbered by cars, and here was the chance. Yet withal I felt a little timid, for though I had never seen Dan. really under the influence of liquor, still, from his heated face and dull eyes, I knew he had been drinking; yet the next moment I laughed at myself for my fears, and yielding to the temptation, was soon ready for my ride.

"I will just step in and tell father I'm going," I said, as we were passing the baggage room.

"No, you won't," said he, roughly seizing me by the arm. Then, seeing my surprise, he added quickly, "We haven't time to stop," and hurried me on to the engine.

Then, getting on himself, we started off.

As we passed the depot my father came out, and appeared to call to us to stop; but Dan. only laughed, and put the engine to a greater speed. For a few moments I wondered what my father could have wanted of me; but soon the novelty of my position drove every other thought away. I had been taking little notice of Dan., but presently turning to speak to him, I saw him just taking a good-sized bottle away from his mouth. He smacked his lips, and muttered something about courage, before he saw me looking at him.

"What is that you have been drinking, Dan.?" I asked.

"Whiskey," he answered, putting the bottle to his lips again.

"Please do not drink any more," I said, frightened. "I want you to show me how to run the engine."

"And how to stop her too, I suppose," he said, with a laugh that somehow made my blood run cold.

"Now, my dear, I've a thing to tell you: this 'ere engine is going at a pretty good speed, and according to my calculations, *if we're not hindered*, we'll reach Western in just fifteen minutes."

I gave a sigh of relief: only fifteen minutes; they would soon pass. He seemed to read my thoughts, for after taking another long drink from his bottle, which was evidently having an effect upon him, he continued:

"You think you will be safe when you reach Western, now, don't you? but," with a horrible oath, "you'll never reach there alive. Do you suppose I was going to let you live when you wouldn't marry me? I laid awake all night, thinking how I could pay you off, and my plan has worked beautiful, for here you are, caught like a mouse in a trap. I wasn't sent to Western; that was only part of my plan; for you know, may be, and may be you don't know, that between here and there there is only a single track, and in just ten minutes the express will be up. She don't stop at Western, and we'll meet her just about two miles this side the station. They won't see us till they're close on the curve, and then it will be too late; they will run slap into this 'ere engine, and dash us to pieces."

He paused, and took another long drink from his bottle. Far away I thought I heard the whistle of a locomotive. An expression of fright and horror passed over his face, as though he was but just conscious of the fearful thing he had done. Again I heard the whistle, this time a little louder; he staggered to his feet.

"She's coming," he said, in a hoarse whisper.

And before I could guess his intention, he had sprung wildly from the side of the engine. It was a terrible moment. We were already within sight of the curve, and I expected each minute to see the express train rounding it. I was only eighteen, and life was fair and sweet to me. I thought of my father, and how lonely he would be without me, his only child. Was there no escape? no averting the fearful death which was so near me? On and on we rushed; we were at the curve. I closed my eyes and prayed—prayed as we only do when death is looking us in the face. I waited for the crash of the two engines. We were round the curve I felt sure. I opened my eyes, fearing I was only opening them to see my death coming. But no; as I looked eagerly forward, I thought I saw the express train stopping at the station. I started to my feet; might I not still be saved? Oh, if I could but stop the engine! Like an inspiration came the thought. "To start the engine, Dan. turned on the steam," I said, taking hold of the starting bar, "by pulling this out; therefore the way to stop must be to push it in," suiting the action to the word. We were still about a mile from the station. I looked longingly at the brake, too heavy for my woman's hands to turn, but felt the next moment, with a thrill of joy, that the engine was beginning to slacken her speed; and as we reached the further end of the platform at Western station, not twenty feet from the express train, she stopped. Kind hands helped me from the engine, and eager voices asked an explanation of my strange position; but it was not given, at least not by me, for sight and strength failed me, and I fainted. When I came to myself, about an hour after, I found my father leaning over me.

"Thank God, you are safe, my darling!" he said tenderly.

I shuddered as I thought of my wonderful escape, and asked by what good providence the express train had stopped at the station.

"Why, you see," said my father, "just as you started off with Dan., William Dean came in to me, and said:

"'For God's sake, Markman, make your daughter get off that engine. Dan. has been drinking all the morning, and is in no fit state to be with her. He cannot run to Western before the express is due, and if they meet on the single track that is death to them. I ran out and called to Dan. to stop, but, you know, he would not. Oh, my darling, I can't tell you how I felt when I saw that iron creature taking you away to what seemed certain death. I staggered like a drunken man, and hadn't any more wit than one; but William's head was clear.

"'We may save her yet,' he said, and rushed into the telegraph office, and sent this message:

"'Stop the 11:20 express at Western station.'

"And then we both started off for Western as fast as we could go."

When I told them my story, they went to look for Dan. They found him just where he had jumped off, quite dead!

It was long before I recovered from the effects of my fright, and as was natural, William Dean called often to see me. And at last there was a quiet wedding, and father, without losing a daughter, gained a son.

THE SEALED WILL.

BY ANNA SHEILDS.

"Do you suppose, mamma, in case the money goes from me, that it will be given to you?"

"Dear child, how can I even guess? Your aunt, remember, is your father's sister, not mine; so it is scarcely likely she has even thought of me. I am afraid the heir in the sealed will is John Garland."

"Mamma!"

"It is only guess-work, dear."

"But he is so unfit to have the responsibility of money; a man known to be a gambler and a drinking man, if not an actual drunkard."

"Very true. Yet he is the nearest relative your Aunt Jessie had, excepting only yourself."

"I can scarcely think Aunt Jessie would leave him fifty thousand dollars."

"My dear, she has left it to you, her niece and namesake."

"But upon condition that I never marry. If I do, the sealed will in the hands of her lawyer is to be opened, and the money pass from me to the heir or heirs designated therein. You must know me well enough to be sure the money could never tempt me to break my engagement; yet, for your sake, I wish—Oh, why did Aunt Jessie leave it to me at all?"

"Do not think of me. I can live as we have done since your father died. But, Jessie," and Mrs. Markham's face looked grave and sad, "there is one view of the matter you do not take."

"I dare say there are fifty. Remember we have only had an hour or two to think, since the letter came from the lawyer. But what is the view you mean?"

"Charlie."

"Charlie!"

Jessie's large brown eyes were opened to their widest extent as she repeated the name, adding:

"Why, I haven't thought of anything but Charlie!"

"But—I mean— Dear me!" said the mother, shrinking from uttering her own thought, "You know, dear, you have always been considered your aunt's heiress; and Charlie is young, and only commencing the practice of his profession. It may be that he will—"

"Be false to me for the sake of money?" interrupted Jessie, with the rosiest of cheeks and brightest of eyes. "We will soon test that," and she drew a writing table to her side. "I will send him a copy of the lawyer's letter, and"—here her voice and eyes softened—"the assurance that Aunt Jessie's will makes no difference to me."

Mrs. Markham made no objection to this step; but after the letter was signed, sealed and dispatched to the village by Polly, the only servant of the Markham household, she called Jessie again to her side.

Over the fair sweet face of the young girl there had crept a shade of gravity and perplexity since the arrival of the lawyer's letter, that clouded the brown eyes and gave the sensitive, mobile mouth a firmer pressure than was quite natural. Life had not been all sunshine for Jessie Markham, yet hers was one of the buoyant natures who find the silver lining for every cloud, and coax some sweetness from every bitter dose. Her father had been dead six years, and his business affairs having become complicated in some way not comprehensible to feminine intellects, his widow and child had found themselves reduced to an income that barely covered the necessaries of life. They left the city, and took a small cottage in the pretty village of Merton, where Mrs. Markham soon procured a class of music scholars, and herself gave Jessie lessons in the higher branches of English studies, German, French and music, till, at eighteen, her daughter also procured a few pupils in languages. They were very happy in their mutual affection, in the love of their pupils, and the cares of their little household.

It had been understood from the time Jessie was a tiny baby, that she would inherit the fortune of her maiden aunt, for whom she was named, and who came from the city every summer to spend a month or two in the little cottage, always bringing pretty presents to brighten the home of her brother's widow, and lavishing tenderest affection upon her niece.

Yet, though Jessie herself had known of her aunt's supposed intentions, neither she nor her mother had ever made calculations upon a fortune dependent upon the death of one for whom they felt the warmest affection, and the idea that others could be influenced by it was a new thought to the young girl.

She had given to her betrothed, Charlie Seaton, the first love of her young heart, believing his love was all her own. In the six years she had lived in Merton, child and maiden, Charlie Seaton had been her devoted admirer from the first. He was young, only twenty-three, and had recently finished his course of law study, and been admitted to the bar. His fortune, inherited from his father, was very small, barely covering his expenditure for board and clothing; but he was energetic, industrious, and, without brilliant talent, a clear-headed, intelligent student, promising to make a capable lawyer, if not a shining light at the bar.

Answering her mother's call, Jessie nestled down in her favorite seat at her feet, saying sadly:

"If Charlie was influenced by any hope of Aunt Jessie's money, mamma, it is better to know it now. I had supposed we would have to wait for our wedding-day until he had some practice, and you know I have a little sum of my own toward first expenses. We could live here, and— There, I will not think of it any more till the answer comes to my letter."

"While you wait, dear," said her mother, "shall I tell you what I think is the explanation of your aunt's singular will? You, who knew her only as the gentle, sad woman of her later years, can scarcely realize, I presume, that she was once as bright, hopeful and sunny-tempered as yourself. I think it is to save you from her own sorrow that she has taken from you the power of giving wealth to a mere fortune-hunter. She would have you wooed and won for yourself alone, and as she has never positively said you were to be her heiress, she has probably never supposed Charlie biassed by that hope. Still, dear, it is possible."

"Yes, it is possible," said Jessie slowly; "but tell me about Aunt Jessie."

"Your grandfather Markham, Jessie, was one of the leading merchants of New York when your aunt, his only daughter, was introduced to society. Your Uncle Hoyt was in good practice as a physician, your father doing then a fair business, and already married, and in his own home. It was therefore with the name of an heiress that Jessie danced through her first season, a careless, light-hearted girl, very pretty, and sufficiently accomplished to make a pleasing impression wherever she went. She was but little over twenty when she became engaged to Stanley Horton, the most fascinating man in all our circle of friends. Not only handsome and talented, and he was both, but possessing in a remarkable degree the courtly polish and winning grace of manners that go so far toward gaining a woman's heart. The absorbing love Jessie felt for him seemed mutual, and congratulations were the order of the day, when your grandfather failed. From a man of wealth he became actually poor, and losing energy and hope, he came with Jessie to share our home. Stanley Horton, the man we all supposed a devoted lover, was fully aware of the change in Jessie's prospects, yet he continued his visits, making no abrupt, ungentlemanly desertion of his betrothed. Yet we, who watched her with the jealousy of affection, soon discovered a change in her. She became pale and sad, often tearful, till finally she confided to me that Stanley was evidently weary of her, and had ceased to love her. Even then she attributed the change to some defect in herself not seeing the mercenary motive till later, when time had taken the glamour of love from her eyes and heart. She gave him back his ring and promises; thus accepting the position his unmanly conduct forced upon her, of herself breaking the engagement between them. The first love of her life was the last. She was your grandfather's comfort until he died, and then went to keep house for Hoyt, who lost his wife and baby one year after his wedding-day. When he died, he left her the house and his money, and she lived there till she died. She wanted to adopt you when your father died, but I could not give you up. Still I know she loved you, and I am quite sure her will is not designed so much to keep you single, as it is to give you an opportunity to win the disinterested love of your future husband."

There was a long silence after Mrs. Markham concluded her story, and Jessie allowed her head to rest in her mother's lap, under her mother's caressing hand, trying to picture a future of easy competency shared by this companion of her life. It had its bright side; there was still love and happiness for her yet. And then a bright face crowned with curly brown hair would come before her, and she knew that neither the handsome house nor comfortable income could ever fill her heart if Charlie left a void there.

Suddenly, like a gust of wind, there swept into the little sitting-room a tall, broad-shouldered young man, in a gray tweed suit and slouch hat, which latter article found a resting place upon the floor, as the young giant braced himself before Jessie in an attitude of grim defiance, that sent thrills of glad music into her heart.

"Will you have the kindness, Miss Markham," said the intruder, towering in his six feet of manhood over Jessie's low seat, "to tell me what you mean by the absurd letter Polly handed me? Was it not fully understood that you and I were to share this cottage with your mamma until I attained sufficient legal eminence to warrant the purchase of a brown stone front in New York? Was I not deluded into the belief that your presence in the culinary department of our establishment was to reduce our expenses to the limits of our present income? Was it not represented to me that my present board bill was sufficient to meet the requirements of two in this domicile? In short, Miss Markham, in what way was I ever led to suppose that the fortune of your spinster aunt was to influence in the slightest degree your matrimonial intentions with regard to myself? I pause for a reply."

Jessie stood up, her hands meekly folded together, and her happy eyes downcast till the long lashes kissed her cheek.

"Please forgive me this time, and I'll never say it again," she said; and then the laugh dimpled her cheek, danced in her eyes, and rippled out clear and sweet upon the air.

"Oh, Charlie! Charlie! I knew you never thought of Aunt Jessie's money."

"And you," said Charlie, holding her off at arm's-length, "you can have it all, if you give me up."

"As if I loved money better than you!" said Jessie, nestling in the strong arms now wrapped closely around her.

It seemed, however, as if Charlie was actually afraid of the money that was so temptingly near Jessie's grasp, for he commenced a series of interviews that bore entirely upon the subject of an immediate marriage.

What was there to wait for, he would ask, and then enter upon calculations of his present expenses and those of the future, proving most conclusively that there was a decided saving for both in uniting their incomes.

"You remind me," said Jessie, "of the Dutchman who said he could almost support himself alone, and it was a pity if two of them could not do it entirely."

But though she laughed at him, Jessie was quite willing to admit the force of his reasoning; and one bright June morning, six months after Aunt Jessie's death, there was a wedding at the village church, and a breakfast in the cottage for a few chosen friends. Among these was Aunt Jessie's lawyer, for the will had stipulated that the sealed codicil was to be opened at Jessie's wedding, if she preferred love to money.

The bride was a little paler than usual when, with a solemn face, the New York lawyer broke the big red seal. Visions of John Garland holding drunken revels in her aunt's house flitted across her mind, and then she looked into Charlie's face, and over her own crept an expression of perfect content.

The will was opened, and found to contain only a letter, directed to Jessie, and a short, legally worded formula, making herself and her chosen husband joint inheritors of her aunt's fortune. Tearfully the bride opened the letter from the dead.

With loving words Aunt Jessie blessed her, and wished her happiness.

"I do not," she wrote, "approve of the money power in a family being entirely in the hands of a woman; therefore you will find, dear Jessie, that half of my fortune only is yours, the remaining half to go to the husband who has proved he loved you for your own sweet self, not for your fortune."

During the wedding tour of the young couple Mrs. Markham, at their earnest solicitation, took an affectionate farewell of her pupils, and removed her household treasures to the New York mansion; to which, in due time, came Charlie and Jessie, to brighten the long silent rooms with their happiness, and establish that loving circle that makes *home* of any house, however grand, or however poor.

AN EXPRESSIVE CHARGE.

The charge of a Western Judge, quoted below, is not a fable. It transpired in Burkeville, on the southern confines of Jackson county, near the Tennessee border. It was a case of horse-stealing, in which was mixed up the shooting of two dogs, and the threatened shooting of two or three men. Old John M. Dabney, of Logansport, was on the bench. Both plaintiff and defendant were of the very worst class of society; the witnesses introduced were from the slums of the river, and the counsel engaged were better fitted to grace the gambling-table than the bar of justice. The trial dragged its repulsive length through one whole day, and half of another, and finally Judge Dabney arose to charge the jury. His face was moulded to an expression of utter disgust, and for once in his life he had resolved to speak his mind.

"Gentlemen of the Jury," said he, with decision, if not with dignity, "in this case counsel on both sides are impudent and unintelligible; the witnesses on both sides are indecent and incredible; and the plaintiff and defendant both stand such acknowledged rogues that it is to me utterly indifferent which way you give a verdict." C.

A SHELL.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

Little shell, bright shell, lying on my palm,
You bring back unto my heart the long day's calm—
The long, long summer day when I walked by the sea,
And 'midst the drifts of snow-white sand plucked you for memory.

Little shell, sea-shell, it was a day of rest,
The day of all the summer days that did seem best.
If Nature had drawn to her gates and shut us in,
Not further could have seemed the world's wild clash and din.

Little shell, white shell, those hours shall come no more;
There ne'er is born a day again like one that went before;
But sadder or gladder though all the others be,
I'll keep you in remembrance of one day beside the sea.

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THE BROADACRES TRAGEDY; OR, The Irrevocable Promise.

By CARLOTTA KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERY OF NO. 27," "FILIPPO, THE BANDIT," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XII.

SCHEMES.

> Ah, that deceit should steal such gentle shapes,
> And with a virtuous visor hide deep vice.
> SHAKESPEARE.

Ernestine Tudor had nearly gained the head of the staircase which led to the more cheerful portion of the building when she heard a step behind her, and turning around she beheld in the dim light the figure of Adkins rapidly yet cautiously approaching her.

"A word with you, Miss," he said.

She turned aside, and seated herself in one of the broad windows to hear whatever the man might have to say.

"I'd give the best years of my life, if this thing hadn't happened," he said, wiping the perspiration which anxiety caused from his brow; "but since it's out, I hope you won't take any advantage of it. Mr. Manning may be wrong in many things. I won't say he's been fair in his deal with yonder young gentleman, but as long as I'm in his service I'll stand by and defend him."

"Answer me one or two questions and I'll again promise you that I'll not speak a word of what I have discovered."

"Well, Miss, if your questions are such that I can answer—"

"They are. Tell me; does your master, Mr. Manning, know that you rescued this young gentleman from death?"

"No, Miss; he does not. I wouldn't dare tell him; you know why."

"For fear he would make surer work with his life next time?"

"I fear so."

"Well, I suspect he has left Broadacres because there are officers on his track. Am I right?"

"Yes."

"If he has such important interests at stake, it would be natural for him to lurk somewhere in the neighborhood to watch his chances—would it not?"

The man hesitated; he feared that in answering this question he would endanger his master's safety.

"Answer me," commanded the young lady. "Remember that I can do your master irreparable injury, if you are silent. Is he in this vicinity?"

"He is."

"Can you take a message to him from me?"

"I can."

"Then go to him as quickly as possible and say that he has another friend at Broadacres besides yourself."

The man looked at the speaker in great surprise.

"I mean what I say," she continued. "I wish to see your master and have some conversation with him, if he and you can manage an interview with safety."

"What do you propose doing, my lady?"

"That I will explain to Mr. Manning, your master," she said. "I only ask of you that you will not disabuse yonder invalid's mind of the impression that it was me instead of Miss Eristoun whom he met upon the highway the night of his attempted assassination. Will you bear this continually in mind?"

"I will."

"Then you need have no fears from me regarding your master's safety."

She arose as she spoke, and assuring herself that the man had nothing further to reveal, she bade him a friendly good-night and descended to her own chamber.

Reaching it without her absence having been observed, she locked herself securely within, and threw herself into a deep armchair before the open window and gave herself up to extravagant speculations concerning the future.

Her love of the marvellous had found abundant food in the incidents brought to her notice since her arrival at Broadacres, and with the prescience of an unscrupulous mind she foresaw that certain results would arise from future developments, which, if rightly directed, would accrue to her own benefit.

Unconsciously she murmured the same sentiment which the designing Walter Manning uttered when he was searching in Marmaduke Eristoun's desk for the coveted papers.

"Agatha surely said that her inheritance of Broadacres depended upon her marriage with her father's favorite kinsman, the same Walter Manning who lies in Lady Alicia's ill-omened chamber. What can be the terms of that condition, and what the consequences, should they not be fulfilled? I would give the world if I could know, for upon that knowledge all my own plans may hinge. I thought to discover it from Adkins' master, and so declared myself his friend and solicited an interview. Yet I must not lose my hold upon the friendship of the handsome invalid up stairs. *Mirabile!* how handsome the fellow is! He certainly possesses the noblest countenance I ever beheld."

She mused awhile in silence, and then breaking forth into a low, rippling laugh, she exclaimed:

"Yes. Is it not strange? People of noble inspirations and irreproachable lives have always been my dupes; so why should not I reasonably expect, when I meet with such, that they will be more fitting instruments to further my aims than those whose minds are constituted like my own? My plans for the present, therefore, will be to pay assiduous court, in the *rôle* of humble, devoted friend, to both Agatha and her devoted lover up stairs. But by fair means or foul, I must soon discover more than I already know about this conditional inheritance of Broadacres.

"I should greatly like to become the mistress of such an estate," she continued, leaning toward the window and gazing admiringly upon the fair land which in the moonlight lay spread out like a beautiful picture before her. "Yes, I certainly should like, above all things, to be mistress of Broadacres," she repeated, after a few moments' pause, wherein she seemed to have been debating the question with herself. "Of course I should not dispossess Agatha of a home here. It would delight me to have her always make it her residence, but to be mistress of the finest country seat in America—to be supported by the ample revenues which arise from the rent of contingent farms—to give splendid *fêtes-champêtre* in summer, and during the holidays and Easter week to fill this noble mansion with merry throngs of the choicest city society, would be to lead an ideal life. It is a prize well worth striving for, and strive for it I will, with all the faculties at my command. If I only knew to whom the estate would fall, should Agatha not marry her cousin, I should feel infinitely relieved; but I will not spoil my complexion and dim my eyes with worrying about it. Chance has always favored my plans, and I will trust to that hope again. I feel within me an assurance of ultimate happiness such as has never played me false. So good-night, bright world; and good-night, Agatha, *mon amie!* Who knows but that some day you will be my guest, instead of I yours?"

She quickly undressed, and throwing herself upon the luxurious couch, was soon buried in a sleep as profound as though it had been the sleep of the just.

Her dreams were of a nature to strengthen the resolve she had formed, for in them she beheld herself the mistress of the grand old Eristoun mansion, admired, fêted, courted and caressed. By her side there stood one whose face she could not distinguish, but upon the hand which held hers in a conjugal clasp she beheld the ring of curious workmanship which Agatha had that morning shown to her.

He murmured low, eloquent words in her ear as he stood at her side receiving the congratulations of their guests, and her heart responded to his words with high throbs of rapturous love and gratified ambition.

She strove to raise her eyes to her husband's face, and to penetrate the mist which shrouded his features, but her sight seemed dimmed by the effort, and her object was baffled.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARMADUKE ERISTOUN'S FOE.

> Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
> Accursed, and in a cursed hour, he hies.
> MILTON'S PARADISE LOST.

It was even as the inmate of Lady Alicia's chamber said, as Ernestine Tudor suspected, and as the reader was doubtless convinced: Walter Manning, to whom Agatha Eristoun had pledged her hand, believing him her father's choice, did indeed make the foul attempt upon the life of the young Englishman who was Miss Eristoun's escort to the entrance of her home.

Years before, when Marmaduke Eristoun met and became fascinated with the charms of the young lady who afterward became his wife, there was another who also laid claim to her affections and sued for her hand.

It was Eristoun's kinsman, a man with whom circumstances had connected him, yet the two were utterly uncongenial, for the one was upright, noble and true, while there was no unscrupulous craft or device to which the other would not have recourse.

The natural antipathy existing between the two became open antagonism when Theodora St. Albans made her choice between them, and bestowed her hand upon the virtuous Eristoun.

Never before had Walter Manning, the discarded suitor, been denied what he craved, and unwilling to believe that anything but his handsome, richer rival stood between him and success, he swore a fearful oath that his resentment should never slumber nor sleep; that sooner or later he would forget his disappointment in the misery of the two who had caused it; and should death deprive him of his prey before his object was attained, he would still keep green the memory of his wrongs, and if life were spared him, would carry his hatred to the second or third generation.

Reckless, unprincipled and prodigal, his career soon became circumscribed by want of the large revenues he once enjoyed, for these had been dissipated by wasteful expenditure; and in proportion as his own wealth was squandered, that of his rival kinsman increased, for every year saw his enormous income become larger by careful and profitable investments.

Younger by nearly ten years than Marmaduke Eristoun, and possessing such a physique that neither age nor fast living could make much impression upon his appearance, Walter Manning passed for a still younger man than he really was, and to the eyes of those who were in no way concerned in wishing to promote his length of days, he seemed to have discovered the fount of Perpetual Youth.

Through prosperity, happiness and success this man followed the steps of Marmaduke Eristoun with the persistence of a bloodhound. The unerring instinct of the proprietor of Broadacres taught him that the threats of his enemy would not prove idle; and when disease attacked his once robust frame, and reduced him to a state of physical and mental weakness, this belief fastened itself so strongly upon his mind that he found it impossible to shake it off.

It seemed to him like a warning, a premonition of danger from which death had removed his wife, as it might also himself, but it could not shield their only child—a daughter.

It was this foreboding fear that induced the anxious father to summon his daughter home in such haste from her French convent, that she might be warned by him of his fears, and therefore forearmed.

For days and weeks the doomed lord of Broadacres watched for the arrival from England of his daughter's affianced husband, the one whom he judged would be her shield and protection from the danger the future so imperfectly concealed from his view; but when he came not, all his hopes were centred upon the more certain return of his daughter, that into her ear he might pour his anxiety.

She never knew of the feud which existed between her father and his kinsman—never knew, in fact, that such a kinsman existed—for her father, in his fears for the future, dreaded acquainting her with the fact.

Fearing that death would overtake him before he should be able to fulfill this last duty, he wrote a full account of his own antecedents and those of his dreaded rival, and having carefully sealed the paper, placed it with another of equal importance in the ebony cabinet.

His daughter came; but she arrived too late to receive from her father's lips a verbal statement of the dangers to which her orphaned state subjected her. His fearful reference to his apprehensions indeed fell upon her ears, but her heart was bursting with grief, and she paid but little heed to his words.

Only she heard and treasured in her memory his parting admonition that she should speedily become the wife of her cousin, who was momentarily expected; and when there suddenly appeared in the death chamber a stranger, and when the parting breath of her father proclaimed his name, wherein was the wonder that Agatha Eristoun should have received him implicitly as the Walter Manning whom she was expected to marry?

She was indeed perplexed with the apparent disparity in age between the lover of her childhood as he should now be, and the man who came to claim her as his bride, and her heart did not respond to his endearments as it had done in days gone by; yet her resolution was unalterable, and when Walter Manning again appeared at Broadacres, it was her fixed purpose to stifle her own feelings and become his wife.

Deep in her inmost soul, however, there lurked sentiments which, had she stopped to analyze them, might have filled her pure breast with anxiety, and in time, with horror.

As at the park gates, upon that memorable moonlight night, she had contrasted the stranger standing before her with her accepted lord, so from time to time did she now, and at each retrospect the character, the appearance of the one became more lovely, while that of the other grew proportionately hateful.

"I cannot banish from my recollection the memory of that voice, nor of those features," she would often exclaim, when communing with herself. "His was the voice, and his the countenance which of right belong to Cousin Walter, methinks; for I surely traced in them a faint resemblance to what he was when we were both so young and happy together. I feel my heart throb with a glow of pleasure as I recall the words and the kind manners of the stranger, but pain and grief quickly succeed them when I recollect that for me that noble life was undoubtedly sacrificed. Perchance, however, a dark, inexorable, yet really kind providence lives behind that dark deed, for I selfishly trace in his disappearance an event which perhaps insures my own peace of mind and possible happiness. My heart is very tender, and while listening to his words, it unconsciously warmed toward him. So what if after interviews had beguiled me from my promise to my father, and my duty to Walter! I must quench even the remembrance of those feelings. The only sentiment I can loyally maintain is hatred toward his murderer, and a desire that his death should be avenged. In that I am but fulfilling my duty as a woman, and as mistress of the spot upon which the crime was committed; yet, if below that sentiment there lurks a kindlier feeling toward the victim, is it a crime to revere the memory of a dead friend?"

By such sophistries as these, and by such tender reflections did Agatha Eristoun keep alive in her heart and memory the image of Walter Manning, the rightful claimant of her heart and hand.

And the subtle kinsman, the crafty intriguer who would sacrifice a young girl's happiness and blast her life to further his own wild cravings for revenge, what of him?

Ever since the moment when he saw Theodora St. Albans leave the foot of the altar the bride of Marmaduke Eristoun, he had panted for an opportunity of being revenged.

His was a nature which would never give over a pursuit, especially when that pursuit was prompted by hatred and fancied wrong.

He heard of the death of his once wished-for bride without a pang of regret. His was not the unalterable love which hopes all things, even the death of his successful rival, and his own ultimate union with the object of his warmest affection. Theodora St. Albans had become to him as though she had never been. He would not have hesitated to lift a cowardly hand against her, if he could thereby more surely have found the way to her husband's heart.

The grave closed over her, and as though the event had brought to the mind of the avenger the fear that Marmaduke Eristoun would also thus escape him, the wiles of Walter Manning became more strongly woven about his victim, and he made greater haste to quaff the sweet cup of vengeance.

His roving life, his extravagant tastes, and his haughty aversion to personal effort, reduced him from affluence to the greatest perplexity regarding his future. His peculiar talents, or let us rather say vices, sufficed to amply supply his present wants, yet the fear of ultimate poverty was a powerful incentive to his hate, and in an evil hour his too active brain resolved upon as fiendish a combination as ever the heart of man devised.

The wealth of Marmaduke Eristoun having increased with the lapse of years, it was looked upon with covetous eyes by more than one gentle and even noble Englishman. The fame of his daughter's beauty was also coupled with her magnificent prospects, and her father had received more than one flattering overture for her hand, even before Agatha reached a marriageable age.

It soon became known, however, that the wealthy Anglo-American had pledged his daughter's hand to a distant relative, another Walter Manning, who was every way worthy of her, and who, it was also vaguely rumored, held a secret claim upon the kindness of his projected father-in-law.

However this may be, when the report reached the ears of the unscrupulous Manning, he swore by all that his black heart held most sacred that the marriage between his namesake and Marmaduke Eristoun's daughter should not take place. By fair means or foul, he would himself win the hand of the beautiful American heiress, and become possessed of her wealth.

With bold words of bravado, and yet with a steady assurance of success, he fearlessly averred that in this second attempt he should not fail. Though fire, earth, air and water, and the powers of the upper and nether worlds opposed him, yet his will should conquer them all, and in the end he would see himself avenged, and rejoicing in a splendid victory.

What boots it now to tell by what means he was led to perfect his accursed plans? Circumstance aided him, and he might well believe that fortune smiled upon his efforts, since all his preliminary movements were crowned with signal success.

By chance he discovered that Marmaduke Eristoun was near his end, and that he had sent an imperative summons to his kinsman to hasten to his bedside, that he might acquaint him with his dying wishes. Immediately the untiring Nemesis put himself upon the track of the fortunate young man, and just as he was on the point of embarking for America provoked a quarrel with him in such a manner that the hot blood of the ardent young Englishman resented the affront as it deserved.

But by the craft of the elder Manning it fell out that the offender was permitted to go free, and his proud, impatient antagonist, despite his protestations, representations and appeals, was detained upon the absurd charges of turbulence and sedition.

The steamer, therefore, which would have taken Agatha Eristoun's lover to America sailed without him, but bore in his stead the same baneful wretch who, a fortnight later, appeared so suddenly before her at Broadacres, and in a moment of weakness and fear forced from the lips of her dying father the name of "Walter Manning," and in reply to her question, was acknowledged as her cousin.

Three days after the departure of this usurper from England, the rightful claimant of Agatha's hand, having established his innocence of the charges preferred against him, embarked upon his mission to America.

Could impatience have wafted the vessel which bore him onward, could prayers and frenzied appeals to Heaven have prolonged Marmaduke Eristoun's life, he had not surely died until Walter Manning reached his bedside; but it was fated otherwise, and when the young man reached Broadacres the first news which greeted him was the intelligence of his friend's death and burial.

A fatal reluctance made him conceal his name and mission from the then unknown Miss Eristoun, and thus he turned from her at the gate to meet a stern encounter with Death.

The usurping Walter Manning, knowing that the delay he had caused his young English rival would not be of long continuance, thought it not prudent to allow his cousin many moments out of his sight before the consummation of their marriage; and when, therefore, he was told that she had been absent from the house many hours, his apprehensions were immediately aroused, and he hastened forth in search of her.

He arrived at the park gates at the very moment that Agatha and her escort also reached them from the opposite direction. His quick ear instantly told him that his fears were realized, and filled with blind rage, he was about springing forward to wreak his vengeance upon both man and maiden, and then to make good his own escape, when he caught words which told him that neither had declared the identity of the other, and that there was still a hope of his own ultimate success.

He stepped quickly into a dense thicket of underbrush, but the instinct of Bruno soon discovered his ambuscade, and he would have been forced to declare his presence had not Agatha and her companion called the dog away.

Then, with a dark purpose growing stronger and stronger within his heart, with set teeth and clenched hands he saw the two part; Agatha, with the dog at her side, going swiftly back to the house, and the stranger, mounting his horse, ride away.

But not far did he ride before he was aware that one had vaulted upon the horse's back behind him, and he felt a firm grip upon his throat.

He was dragged from his horse, and then began a struggle for life or death. The muttered curses hissed from between clenched teeth told the surprised and almost helpless Manning that his assailant was one from whom he could hope for no mercy, and so with the desperation of despair the struggle was maintained.

Once, twice, three times he had his antagonist beneath him, and believed that, unarmed as he was, he should finally save his life, now doubly dear, since his death would leave his beloved Agatha at the mercy of this vengeful, mercenary wretch; but while he turned himself an instant to gain a greater advantage over his adversary, the other pressed the muzzle of a hitherto concealed pistol to his side, and the baleful shot taking instant effect, he fell to the ground, writhing, bleeding and nearly insensible.

Not satisfied with his work, and fearing the discharge of another shot would compromise his own safety, the inhuman Manning hastily reversed the weapon in his hand, and with its butt dealt fearful blows upon the head and breast of his helpless victim.

He raised his arm to administer a final blow which should send his merciless weapon far into the brain of his rival, when a loud bark sounded in his ear, and his uplifted arm was seized in the fangs of an infuriated dog.

Then self-preservation called loudly for prudence. With a sudden wrench, the violence of which brought tears of agony to his eyes, he tore his arm away from the jaws of the dog, and with a blow felled him to the earth, and for a moment silenced his loud, alarming cries.

With no tumult now raging in his breast, but with the same calmness with which he would have directed the most ordinary affairs of life, he scanned the situation in which he was placed, and calculated the chances of his own escape from danger.

His rival was removed from his path, and now it but remained for him to reap the consequences of his act.

Quick as lightning he dragged the lifeless body from the highway toward the swift running creek which flowed hard by.

He had gained the brink of the stream, and was about plunging the body beneath the water, but at that instant the dog again appeared, and having recovered from the stunning stroke the murderer had administered, returned to satisfy his own fierce rage.

Manning turned toward the animal in time to defend himself from a deadly spring, and with his foot he gave the body upon the edge of the creek a violent thrust.

It yielded to the inhuman impulse, and the murderer believed it had fallen into the water. Then he fought himself clear of his canine antagonist, and slowly made his way back to the park.

By an unfrequented path, and in the dense shadows, he crept back to Broadacres. He reached the mansion without being observed, and then hastily stole to his own room; but throughout the night his guilty conscience was awake, and tormented him with untold scourgings, and fear lent her horrible aid in making the night hideous.

With the morning, however, other thoughts became uppermost, and with superhuman effort he summoned to his aid all the resolution, the firmness and the bravado of his nature, to face the consequences of his black deed.

The reader has seen how he bore himself during the ordeal which awaited him. Proud, haughty, and reserved, no one suspected the prospective lord of Broadacres of this foul deed until the keen-sighted detective appeared upon the scene, and his eyes were not to be blinded by either art, defiance, or hauteur.

In his heart Walter Manning longed for an opportunity of adding one other crime to that which he had already committed, and had an opportunity offered, Williams, the incorruptible detective, would have followed the same gloomy road the stranger had trod; but no such opportunity presented itself, and to avoid the hangman's halter, Walter Manning fled from Broadacres at midnight.

Yet he left carrying with him the conviction that his last hour spent under Marmaduke Eristoun's roof had not been barren of great results, and by means of the papers which he had stolen from the ebony cabinet, he knew he held Agatha Eristoun as firmly bound to him as though they were already man and wife.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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RAISING THE WIND.

A NEC-ROMANTIC SKETCH.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

There had been gala-days at Bighampton. The Highold County Fair had been holden there, and the thing had been a success. There had been big oxen on exhibition, and big cheeses; there had been overfed hogs, and overfed babies; there had been sweet and luscious fruit, and sweet and luscious ladies. So there had been horse-trots and scrub-races; and there had been side-shows of various descriptions. In fact, the farmers and the mechanics, and the wives and daughters of the farmers and mechanics of Highold county had outdone themselves on the occasion.

Peter Titman had come from Littlehampton to attend the fair, and he had gone in for sport without regard to cost. But he might have come off unbroken if he had not been foolish enough to bet on the racing. He staked his money on Ab. Jackson's *Lone-Hand*, and Ab. Jackson's *Lone-Hand* lost, as good judges knew would be the result. And thus, at noon, on the last day of the fair, Peter Titman entered the bar-room of Zeke Jackson's tavern dead broke. Zeke was Ab.'s brother; and Peter felt that he had a grudge against the whole Jackson family. He was half inclined to believe that old Andrew himself was a humbug, albeit his father—the elder Titman—had been a Jackson Democrat of the regular dyed-in-the-wool stamp. Peter turned his pockets inside out, and could not find a solitary scrap of Uncle Sam's illuminated tissue-paper: not even the wherewith to purchase a drop of warming beverage, let alone paying the reckoning he had run up on account of keeping for himself and horse.

What should—what *could*—he do? He sought his friend and chum, Sol. Sloper; but without avail. Sol. was also from Littlehampton, and had come with Peter; and Sol. had staked his money on Ab. Jackson's *Lone-Hand*—a lean, lank, scraggy, Beaver Brook nag that had been brought into notice by sheer impudence and audacity.

"We must go home," said Solomon.

"But how can we go home without our horse? And how can we get our horse without paying our tavern bill?" suggested Peter.

"It's too bad," pursued Sol. "I wanted to stop over this evening and hear the lecture."

"What,—that—"

At this point they were jostled by a crowd who were eagerly discussing the very subject to which Solomon had alluded. And this was the subject:

Professor Melancton Prestoflashibus, from the colleges of Paris and Curragh de Kildare, was advertised to give a lecture on Animal Magnetism, or Mesmerism, in Holden's Hall, in the Crooked River District, that evening; and the placard announcing the same set forth in grandiloquent language the wonders to be exhibited.

The discussion of the gentlemen who had jostled our Littlehampton twain was upon the subject of mesmerism in general, and upon the mesmerism of the Professor in particular.

"It's a confounded humbug, from top to bottom!" declared Abner Jackson.

"A perfectly wicked humbug!" echoed Zeke, his brother. The Professor had not patronized his house, but had put up with Lawyer Holden, hard by the Crooked River bridge.

Peter Titman scratched his head in thought, and pretty soon he pulled Sol. Sloper by the sleeve, and led him out into the stable; and there the two conversed in secret a long time.

"Don't you think your Aunt Sally would help you in this?" asked Peter, at the end of the conference.

"Of course she would," replied Solomon. "Dear old soul! she'd do anything for me."

"Then you'll do. Your face is smooth, and your body's trim and shapely. D'ye think ye can carry it out?"

"Of course I can."

"Then go it. I'll be on the look-out for you."

Solomon posted off to his Aunt Sally's, who lived at the lower end of the village, while Peter returned to the bar-room.

After the lapse of an hour the discussion arose again—this time modestly set on foot by Peter Titman. As before, Zeke and Abner denounced the whole thing as a humbug.

"Gentlemen," said Peter, authoritatively, "you talk of that of which you know nothing. I have made a study of the sublime science, and the powers of the mesmerizer are wonderful. The concatenated fluid, going out from the extended digits of the mesmerizer, can reach to boundless space."

"Perhaps you are a mesmerizer?" sneered Abner.

"I AM!" answered Peter. "I have made the science the study of my life. When you say that no man can control the actions of another with whom he is not in immediate contact, you speak hastily. I could, were I so inclined, show you results of the power which would cause you to gape with wonder. I could," continued Peter, throwing his arms about in a most extraordinary manner, "throw the mesmeric fluid into the body of any person in this room, and bring that person at once to the control of my own will."

Both Abner and Ezekiel laughed scornfully.

"Aye," pursued Peter, enthusiastically, "I could even cause the percussing fluid to go out into a person in the street. I could send it through that open window, and ognostify any man, woman, or child who should come within the sphere of its fructifying influence. It's wonderful, gentlemen!—perfectly wonderful! Why—I sometimes, when I feel the ognasious fluid working in me, as I feel it now, have to shut myself up to keep from doing harm to folks. D'ye see that woman coming up the street?"

The hearers looked out, and saw a female figure, upon the opposite side of the way, walking slowly up the street, with a bundle in one hand, and a blue cotton umbrella in the other. She had on a calico dress, a long sheeny shawl, and an old faded sun-bonnet. They said they saw her.

"If I had a mind," said Peter, "I could throw the mesmeric influence upon that woman so that she would act entirely at my will. See how carefully she carries that bundle, and how she hugs her umbrella! I could make her throw her bundle into the rut, and cast her umbrella down and tread upon it. Aye,—and I feel that I could cause her to lie down and roll in the very dirt upon which she now steps!"

The company laughed.

"I'll bet on it!" said Peter.

It was Fair-time, and the betting propensity was rife.

"I'll bet fifty dollars!" said Peter.

"Put up your money," said Ab. Jackson, drawing his pocket-book.

"Up with the stamps!" chimed Ezekiel, likewise drawing his wallet.

"I'll stake my horse against seventy-five dollars," answered Peter.

"Done!" said Ezekiel.

"It's a go!" said Abner.

They both had plenty of money easily earned. To be sure Abner's horse had lost the race; but Abner had not been foolish enough to stake the bulk of his money on his own nag.

"Understand," said Zeke,—"you are to stand here, just as you are, and, without speaking to that woman, make her throw away her bundle, and trample on her umbrella, and then lay down and roll over in the dirt."

"Exactly," said Peter.

The money was put up into the hands of a disinterested party, and the company witnessed that Peter's horse, then in the stable, was up as a counter stake.

"Now stand by, gentlemen," said Peter, commencing to swing his arms in circles of the most diverse and eccentric description. "Don't speak, and don't move into the way of the ognasious fluid. I feel it going out. Ha! The flragricious element is apparent! The electric current is forming! I feel it in my elbows—in my wrists—in my fingers! Hush! Not a word!—The circle of the Odylic force is complete. My will-power has gone forth!—Easy!—Behold the result!"

And the result was wonderful enough. The woman had stopped as though held by an invisible hand; and it was plain to be seen that she quivered from top to toe. Peter continued his manipulations and his genuflexions, his whole body wrought into strange contortions.

"Behold!" he whispered.

And behold, the woman, with a wild motion, cast her bundle into the rut of the street.

The lookers-on were amazed, and Ezekiel and Abner turned pale.

And still Peter's hands and arms gyrated.

"Behold!" he whispered again.

And behold, the woman cast her blue cotton umbrella upon the ground, and set her feet upon it as though it had been a serpent.

"*Behold!*" exclaimed the contortioned mesmerizer.

And behold, the woman settled down supine into the dust of the highway, and rolled over and over until her dress was smeared and bedraggled.

"Hold!" commanded Peter, as the woman started to her feet, and as several of the men in the bar-room had started for the door. "For your lives venture not near her! For the love of heaven, gentlemen!—Have a care! Startle her not until the odylic force is evaporated from her system. A fright now might kill her. She is as one awaking from a somnambulic state. She knows not what she has done. To startle her now would be little less than murder!"

The words, delivered in a tone of agonizing entreaty, had their effect. The men in the bar-room stood still, while the woman, in an apparently bewildered state, picked up her bundle and her umbrella, and hurried away. She turned the corner by Thorn's meat-shop, and disappeared.

The money was given up to Peter Titman. Zeke and Abner cried "Humbug" and "Fraud" in vain. The man who had hedged heavily against his own horse did not gain the sympathy of the crowd.

Later men went out in search of the woman who had last been seen turning the corner toward Pike's hill; but they could not find her.

Later still Peter Titman drove up to Aunt Sally Sloper's door, and took in Solomon, who looked as innocent as a child, and whose masquerade had proved about as successful as had anything at the fair.

In time Abner and Ezekiel learned how they had been sold, else I had not known it to write it. Abner himself told me the story, and, with the first rough edge worn off, he had come to enjoy it.

◆

FORGIVENESS.

The narrow soul
Knows not the godlike glory of forgiving;
Nor can the cold, the ruthless heart conceive
How large the power, how fixed the empire is,
Which benefits confer on generous minds:
Goodness prevails upon the stubbornest foes,
And conquers more than Cæsar's sword did.

◆

—Do not all that you can; spend not all that you have; believe not all that you hear; and tell not all that you know.

THE FATHER AND MOTHER'S WISH.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

That song is very beautiful,
Full of life, love and light;
But, ah, we would not, cannot have
You sing it thus to-night,
For 'twas your sister's favorite,
And, daughter, as you know,
She left us, by the angels led,
This night a year ago.

How she, you and the children here
Sung it in bounding glee,
And all seemed treasures evermore
For household ministry;
But she was only loaned awhile,
And as the glad notes swell
At such a time as this, we feel
Our hearts may yet rebel.

We must not hear: it only makes
Us weep when we should not,
Content that she has Heaven now
Instead of mortal lot—
That Heaven where she sweetly waits
In endless angel worth,
And ready with songs for us learned,
Too glorious for earth.

Yet, daughter, do not silent be:
As at her last request,
Sing the same hymn you sang when she
Smiled into sacred rest,
Her little hands clasped in our own,
A soft peace on her brow,
And whispering with her last, dear breath,
"I see the angels now!"

JUDGE GUELDER'S WIFE.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

The Judge's wife might have been his daughter, she was so fair and slight and young, and he so stout and gray and elderly. He had never made her heart beat once, in all the time that she had known him. Her father made the match, and her mother smiled on it, and Eunice dared not say "No." She might perhaps—nay, she *would*, if her Cousin Will had spoken of what was in his mind betimes; but Will was poor, and timid too, in this his love affair, though he was brave enough in other things; and Eunice had made up her mind that he did not love her, and so whatever came made little matter.

Alas! after she was Judge Guelder's wife the truth came out, and Eunice knew that she had done what never might be undone too hastily, and that her timid girl's heart had led her astray. She prayed hard to be kept from anything wrong even in thought, and determined to be a true and faithful wife, but she could not tell Will a falsehood.

"Oh, if you had but told me!" she said.

And then he also knew the truth; but he was honest, brave and pure-hearted, and took up his burden of regret like a man.

One man knew all her heart. It was Will's friend, Charles Atwell. He had always hated her, as she believed, because, when they were all children together, she used to ridicule him for being ugly, and having rough hair that blew about his face, and for stuttering, and for his awkwardness. He was not awkward now; he had grown almost handsome, and his hair was rich and black. And Eunice would not have mocked the veriest lout living, in these days of her womanhood, but Charles Atwell had never forgotten. She always believed that he came between Will and herself, in some mysterious way, in that time when she waited, in vain, to hear him say that he loved her. And when, after that unhappy marriage of hers, the heart secret of the two young people came out, this Charles Atwell knew that it had been revealed before Will could have told him, if he would have done so. It was an innocent secret then, at least. They had wept like two children, and Will had kissed her hand, that was all. But Charles Atwell tried to make a guilty one of it by his manner.

He came to call upon the Judge, and when he fell asleep, whispered in his wife's ear that "Will was very well," and asked her "if she had a message for him."

He passed her on the bridge, and said, behind his hand, with that quick catch of the breath that was left of his childish stammer, that "the Judge was coming."

How was it that when, in after days, these young people met by chance, that Charles Atwell always started up before them, played a little farce of surprise, gave Eunice a confidential look and glided away again? Why should she not meet her Cousin Will; she who had been almost like a sister to him once? How dared this man hint such suspicions, in such a way that she could not even show her anger? That was her thought at first. After a while she grew afraid of him. And she was much frightened, when she happened one day to be sitting on a fallen log in the grove near the house, with her hat off and her curls blown about her face, and Will at her feet, looking up into her eyes, yes, and holding her hand too, in his honest, brotherly way, and Charles Atwell had passed with his gun over his shoulder.

"He did not see us," said Will, but Eunice knew he did, for, behind Will's back, he had made a secret sign to her, as who should say, "I am blind to that little picture."

"What matter if he did see two cousins chatting with each other?" Eunice had cried; but her color rose, and she took her hand away from Will as she spoke.

Even that was long ago. She had more reason to be afraid of Charles Atwell now, and she trembled whenever she saw him talking to her husband.

Her husband! How heavily he slept that night! No noise aroused him—not the flapping of the shutters in the rising wind; not the uneasy tossing of his wife, in her little white cot bed, so near his own; not her scream when she started from a restless sleep, and sat up and stared about her, and then hid her head in the counterpane.

He was not a man—this good Judge Guelder—to lie awake. He had an easy conscience and a good digestion. He tried to do his very best, and to be just in every way. If, before he married her, the pretty girl he had chosen had told him that she loved some one else, he would have bidden her go free, and kindly, too. He had only asked for what he wanted, and received it. Naturally he did not quite understand that he was no hero for a love tale. It is hard to believe that of one's self. Yes, he slept soundly, and after a while Eunice slept also; but at dawn both were awakened by rappings at the door, suddenly and terribly, and cries for help, and the sounds of the servants unlocking and unbarring to those without, and their cries of horror.

The Judge, in his dressing-gown, hurried down first; his wife followed. A farmer stood in the door, white and trembling, telling his tale. In the woods beyond the town, through which his wagon had just made its way, he had found a murdered man, lying on his face, and lifting him up, had seen that it was Charles Atwell—Charles Atwell, robbed of his purse, his watch, and his diamond pin, and weltering in his blood, so that the farmer's boots were red with it as he stood at Judge Guelder's door in the pale dawn and told his story.

Eunice sat on the stairs to listen, for she turned too weak and faint to stand; and no one wondered that the Judge's lady swooned quite away at last, Judge Guelder least of all.

"He was her playmate once," he said, as he picked her up in his strong arms, "and she is very sensitive. She used to laugh at his boyish awkwardness, and plague him, I've no doubt; but she really liked him, for all that. Poor little Eunice! It is a hard world for such delicate creatures."

Then he gave his wife to her maid, and went about his sad business. The jury sat that day, and evidence was taken, and another task fell upon Judge Guelder. It came to be his duty to issue a warrant to arrest his wife's cousin, Will Butler, on suspicion of murder. For this is the tale that the landlord of the "Golden Partridge" told.

The two young men had supped at his house, and there had been a quarrel. Some lady's name was mentioned, and Mr. Butler had given Mr. Atwell a blow. It had been necessary to part them afterward, lest they should bring disgrace upon the "Golden Partridge" by a fight, and Mr. Atwell had left the house. In the hearing of many Mr. Butler had threatened revenge, and the other had said something about "the lady's husband." The landlord forgot the lady's name. It was not her surname that was used, but her first, and Mr. Butler had followed Mr. Atwell in ten minutes' time, still very angry with him.

Mr. Butler left at twelve o'clock. He reached home at three. The maiden lady with whom he boarded arose at that hour to let him in. Between twelve and three he could not account for himself, though he avowed his innocence.

So Judge Guelder issued the warrant for his arrest, though he had no doubt that he could clear himself, and told him so when they met. But Will would not look at him, refused all explanation, and said to the man who locked him into his cell:

"Build the gallows for me as soon as you please, for it is my fate to swing on it."

"Be careful, sir," said the man. "If you are guilty, don't—"

"I am innocent," interrupted Will; "but I cannot prove it."

Nor did he endeavor to do so. If he were not guilty, people said he must be mad.

The Judge himself half fancied that the latter must be the case; and telling the news to his wife—breaking it very gently, for he knew that she liked her cousin very much, and that he was her kinsman—asked her if she had ever thought his mind likely to go astray.

"He must prove an alibi, or it will go hard with him," he said; "and this he does not seem to understand."

Eunice had listened to him with her face hidden, and had seemed ready to swoon, but she answered quickly:

"He did not kill him; he did not kill him! He can prove it; I am sure he can prove it." And her grief and tears seemed redoubled, and she trembled like an aspen leaf.

"Poor child!" said the Judge, taking his wife upon his knee. "There are things that even my love cannot shield you from."

And then she clasped him about his neck, and prayed him, for the love of God, to promise her that, no matter how much the evidence seemed to be against her Cousin Will, he would set him free.

"For he is innocent," she whispered; "innocent—innocent. I know he must be innocent—I who have been a sister to him all my life."

"God grant he may prove so!" said the Judge. "And even were he not, I would free him for your dear sake, were it in my power. But I only administer the law of the land, and if his hand be red with blood, he must suffer the penalty, were he my own brother; and I would some other man sat in my seat to-day, sweet Eunice, for my task will be a hard one. All that I may I will do for your cousin; but I am the servant, not master here."

Then his wife kissed him, and wished that God had given him a better woman, as he deserved, and wept upon his bosom. But he told her that since God never made one, that could not be.

So the time for the trial drew near, and counsel were chosen for the prisoner and for the people, and still Will Butler had no word to say that might help him one whit. And no one had seen him between the hours of twelve and three, on the night of Charles Atwell's murder, and he answered thus:

"I was abroad in the woods. I entered no house. No man spoke to me, or met me. I am innocent, but I can prove nothing."

Then they questioned him about a certain scratch upon his cheek, and a blood spot on his collar, and he said that a pin had done it. Then he turned very pale. All signs of guilt, the jury thought; and at last, when the evidence was over, they had scarcely need to ask each other's thoughts, and their verdict was "Guilty," as the Judge had guessed that it would be. For Judge Guelder had gone himself into the prison, and had taken his wife's cousin by the hand, and had asked him to arouse himself and think how he might prove his innocence, and had spoken of Eunice and her grief. And Will Butler had merely said that he was innocent, but could not prove it, as he was wandering about alone in the woods for hours after he left the tavern.

And the Judge had turned away, sad to the soul, and had said:

"Farewell, unhappy man. I see no way in which I can help you."

When the Judge was gone, Will Butler, standing at his window, the grated window of his dreary cell, looked up at the starlit sky, and prayed to the God who set those stars in order, and who could read his heart as no man could.

Then a new thought entered his mind.

When the jailer came to him again, he asked for pen and paper, and wrote this letter to the Judge:

"RESPECTED SIR: I, the unhappy prisoner to whom you were so kind, write to ask a favor of you. I am not guilty of murder, but I cannot prove my innocence enough to hope for acquittal. I pray you then do this for me. I cannot bear the sight of your wife, my Cousin Eunice; it would unman me. Keep her from my cell until I am no longer there. Lead her to think that I have some hope, and hide from her the truth until all is over.

"When they have hung me on the gallows, take her my farewell. Say to her that my last prayer was for her happiness, and that I had no fear of death. So it will be easier for her to bear a kinsman's shameful death, and so she will make no mad efforts to save me. You who love her so well, know that this is wise, and so contrive it.

"WILL BUTLER."

The Judge had this letter in his wallet when he pronounced the sentence of death on Will Butler. He had no doubt of his guilt, but he wept bitterly as he uttered the words that doomed his wife's cousin to the gallows.

Will Butler stood pale and calm. He was no angel, truly, but an erring man; but so look martyrs at the stake; so never looked a murderer. His dark blue eyes were soft and bright and tender; his lips were set as lips are after kisses. One hand lay in his bosom, over a lock of gold-brown hair that he had hidden there. He had no need to pray to be kept steadfast; strength had been given him.

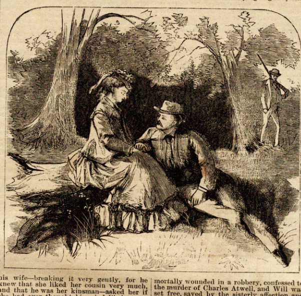
So, calmly, peacefully he awaited his doom. So, with a light upon his face that had never been there before, he said to himself, over and over again, "I am innocent, but must die."

And so the fatal day came, and the gallows was builded, and the crowd assembled, and the fair, sweet face looked down upon them for an instant. Then the eyes, violet dark and softer than any velvet, turned toward the spot where arose against the sky the poplars that stood about the Judge's mansion. The lips moved tremulously, whispering a woman's name, then God's, lowly and reverently, as a murderer's lips might not. And then—"Reprieve! Reprieve!" was shouted, and a messenger came tearing through the crowd, waving a paper.

The Judge had got a reprieve for Will, to gratify his wife, who was ill, and lay in her bed with her new-born babe beside her. She neither knew of the sentence nor of the day of execution nor of the reprieve when that night her husband sat beside her, holding her thin hand and thinking of the face that had been turned toward him in the prison cell.

"God knoweth the truth," said the Judge to himself; "man doth not."

A few weeks later a dying highwayman, mortally wounded in a robbery, confessed to the murder of Charles Atwell, and Will was set free, saved by the sisterly affection and irresistible importunities of the Judge's wife.



SCIENCE.

The startling mortality in Hindostan occasioned by the bite of venomous serpents is at this time attracting considerable attention in England, and many remedies for snake-bite are suggested. Mr. T. Skinner, late commissioner of public works in Ceylon, states that he has twice cured men who were bitten by Tic Polongos—supposed to be the most deadly poisonous of the snakes of that island—by simply cauterizing the wound with his knife, heaping a charge of powder from his flask upon it, and blowing it up in each case. In his work on the natural history of Ceylon, Sir Emerson Tennent says that these snakes seldom attack persons except at night, when they are surprised or trodden on. The natives, "when obliged to leave their houses in the dark, carry a stick with a loose ring, the noise of which, as they strike it on the ground, is sufficient to warn the snakes to leave their path."

Glass coins appear to have been once in use among the Arabians, as we learn from a paper recently read before the Numismatic Society of London. It is stated that they became a part of the Arabic currency during a seven years' famine, when there was a great scarcity of gold and silver. This was between 427 and 487 years after the Hegira, or flight of Mohammed from Mecca, from which event the Mohammedans reckon all their dates. As this occurred in the year 622 of our era, the period of Arabic glass coins must therefore have extended from A. D. 1049 to A. D. 1109.

The view entertained by Sir James G. Simpson, the eminent Edinburgh physician, that small wards for the sick, and small hospitals, are uniformly more healthy than larger ones, has been adopted in Great Britain so far as to lead to the building of a considerable number of cottage hospitals; notwithstanding which, a writer in the *Athenæum* asserts that the statistics on which the conclusion is based are unsatisfactory. No better method of ventilation for individual wards than the old-fashioned system of fireplaces opposite partially opened windows has yet been contrived.

There is a certain remedy for the bite of the cobra-di-capello, despite the common impression to the contrary, if we may believe Dr. D. Butler, late inspector-general of hospitals in the Bengal army. According to him, this remedy consists of brandy and laudanum in excessive doses, but not sufficient to produce narcotism, with ligature of the limb and compulsory locomotion. As the cobra is one of the most venomous of all known serpents, it is surprising that this treatment, if effectual, is not universally employed in India.

The influence of the sun-spots must be great indeed, if they exert half as much as is now attributed to them. Mr. C. Meldrum of the island of Mauritius, Indian Ocean, believes that he has discovered a close relation between the sun-spots and West India hurricanes. Cyclones occur most frequently, he says, a year or two after the sun-spots have been most numerous.

Abbé Moigno, the well-known editor of *Les Mondes*, has commenced a series of receptions to which are invited the most distinguished men of science residing in Paris or visiting the city. Scientific subjects form the topic of discussion, and the entertainment is enlivened each evening by a musical performance, at which some work of one of the great masters is rendered.

The Russians called the island of Spitzbergen, *Grumant*. This name is regarded by some scholars as an evidence that the Russians discovered that desolate region independently; but M. L. K. Daa, of the Swedish Academy of Sciences, states that the earliest English and Dutch visitants called it East Greenland, and maintains that *Grumant* is merely a corruption of *Grönland*.

Vienna is to have a magnificent marine aquarium for the grand international exposition to be opened there in May next. It will contain two hundred thousand gallons of sea-water, to be brought on a fast train the twenty hours' journey from Trieste to the Austrian capital.

The Austrian Polar Expedition, according to latest accounts, will probably have to winter on the island of Nova Zembla, instead of on the Siberian coast, as they intended. The party is provided with food and clothing for three years, and is in excellent health.

An analysis of cow's milk tainted with contagious typhus is given by M. Husson in *Comptes Rendus*, with the conclusion, among others, that such milk cannot transmit the typhus to man, but that it should not be used as food for young children.

Charles Beke, the Abyssinian traveller, has been reviewing Livingstone's letters, and believes with Captain Richard F. Burton that the great explorer has discovered the sources of the Congo, rather than the fountains of the Nile.

It seems that Arsenic is found in the coloring matter of carpets, as well as in that of wall paper. Nor is it confined to green carpets alone; it occurs in both the bright red and dark red shades.

A new gas-making material, called vegetable pitch, is being manufactured in France. It is made of the residues of olive oil, palm oil, and cocoa-nut oil.

A new alum mine has been recently discovered in Algeria, near a place called Fondonck.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CHARLIE (Norfolk) says: "Noticing in the answers to correspondents in the *Ledger* what sensible advice and information you give those who appeal to you, I desire to state a few facts, and will ask your advice in regard to them. I had been on very intimate terms with a young lady, until about six months ago. During that period I have not visited at her residence, but have seen her quite often, and our meetings have always been friendly. I, on one occasion not long since, asked her to attend church with me on a certain Sunday night. She declined, saying it was impossible for her to do so. She, however, went the very night with her half-brother, who was living in the same house. I took no offence though, at this slight—for slight it was. A few days ago I met her, and we had some conversation, during which I told her I would visit her the following Friday. She said she was agreeable. I went up Friday night, and found her not at home. Now, do you think I should request an explanation, or am I at liberty to, or would it be proper, to treat her with supreme contempt? Your reply will be ardently looked for." What is "supreme contempt?" If it is something dreadful, please do not inflict it, as the young lady may only not well know how to decline your advances. Of course, she should have said, "Sir, if, as I presume, you mean to call upon me as a suitor, with the view of marrying me if I should be happy enough to please you, I am obliged to decline the first step in the affair;" but young girls cannot always say just the right thing to fascinating young men who tell them they "are going to visit them." You might ask permission to call; and even if she should not marry you, it would not do to pour "supreme contempt" on every one that prefers not to marry us.

C. W——ER (Macon, Geo.) says: "For several months I have been a constant reader of your most excellent paper, but my greatest pleasure was in reading your Notices to Correspondents, from which I have learned many lessons. I would like you to give me a few directions concerning the writing of poetry. Tell me what constitutes true poetry, and what are the prerequisites to writing it; and if there is any publication which can be used as a guide, showing the principles, rudiments, and in fact the art of poetry itself. If no such book exists, please give me a little light on the subject from your own pen. Please do not throw this aside, but let me have an answer in the next *Ledger*." We feel the responsibility of saying anything that may possibly let loose on an unoffending race one more "poet" who is not recognized as such by the race. In our judgment, the essential qualities of a true poet are, remarkable common-sense, goodness of character, some scholarship, or what is called "culture," an eye for the beautiful, a knowledge of the true, and an ear for music, or rhythm. Horace has written a most sensible "art of poetry," and has had many translators, and many imitators, and Moir, Jaine, and all the critics between them, have discussed the elements of poetry and the rules of poetic taste.

TELEMACHUS says: "Like a great many others, I come to you for advice. I am seventeen years old, and am keeping books at a salary of $600 per annum; think I have talents for the business, and have the full confidence of my employer. I left school last spring to accept this situation, but I want to go some more before it is too late, as I won't be admitted after I am eighteen. When I left school I was pursuing the following studies: Algebra, Latin, German, Natural Philosophy, Arithmetic, etc. I have read Æsop's Fables and part of the Mythology. Algebra I had just begun; but am proficient in arithmetic. Do you advise me to throw up my situation and return to school, or take a night course at some business college? I desire to read Homer, Seneca, and other classical authors, to solve the problems in Euclid. This, a business education will not enable me to do. Please answer this, as I intend to abide by what you say, and confer a favor." If you do not require your salary to live on, go to school, college, Homer, and Seneca; but if you have to "win honest bread" for yourself, go to a night school, perfect your business education, get good translations of Homer and Seneca, and trust to the future to bring you opportunities of getting more knowledge.

TWO FRIENDS say: "In the extremity of distress, two friends turn to you, sure of good counsel and sound advice. Our case is as follows: Since childhood we have been as sisters; few disputes have arisen to cloud the bright horizon of our lives. All has been calm and peaceful until within the last few weeks. A young minister of talents and pleasing appearance has been very attentive to both of us, each having reason to believe his attentions meant for herself. Finally, confiding one to the other, we found that he had made proposals of marriage to both. What shall we do, both having loved him distractedly, to punish his perfidy? We desire as speedy a reply as possible, as we only wait for your answer to act." The best way is to invite the young gentleman to meet you both and to state the case. If he has no explanation to offer, you are at liberty to "tar and feather him," morally, by telling him what you think of his baseness, and that the disclosure has cured you of any partiality that his sacred profession may have won for him; and so dismiss him. Your duty ends there, and it is your wise course to stop there, because no prudent young girl wishes to announce that she "loved distractedly" where it is impossible to marry.

G. A. C. AND G. D. S. (Chicago, Ill.) say: "The following question is respectfully submitted for a final decision. Please answer in your Notices to Correspondents. Dating from the commencement of the Christian era to January 1st, 1873, are we to infer that 1,873 years have passed, or that the above date is the *first* day of the 1873d year? Please answer at your earliest convenience, stating reasons for conclusions." The first anniversary of the Chicago fire has passed, and we are now in the *second* year since that sad event. By examining their neighbors our correspondents can inform themselves of the exact date of the fire, and the exact date of the first anniversary. By a vigorous exercise of their own minds they can then satisfy themselves that two years since the fire will not have elapsed till the next anniversary. When it has passed, there will be two complete years, and G. A. C. and G. D. S., if not worn out by intense mental effort by that time, will then be in the *third year since the Chicago fire*. On the same principle we take next New-year's day to be the first day of the 1873d year. Eighteen hundred and seventy-three years will have passed on the 31st December, 1873.

SEARCHER (Philadelphia) says: "You appear to be so thoroughly up in Scripture history that perhaps you can resolve me the following: In 2d Timothy 3:8 I read, 'Now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so also do these resist the truth,' etc. But I find no mention of, or reference to these, 'Jannes and Jambres,' in the Pentateuch or elsewhere, in all the Bible. Pray then, can you inform me who or what they were, and on what occasion they 'withstood Moses?' Also why Moses himself never alludes to the circumstance? By so doing you will confer a favor on a faithful reader of the *Ledger*." According to ancient Hebrew tradition Jannes and Jambres were prominent among the magicians who withstood Moses. Timothy and Hebrew readers would understand the allusion. There are many traditions and guesses regarding them, some wise and some otherwise; but the above is the generally received account of them.

AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER (New York) says: "I am a young man, twenty-one years of age, and by an accident have become a cripple for life, and consequently can do no heavy work. Previous to the accident I had always earned my own living, and would like to do so now. Do you think I could earn a little money at copying, and if so, where could I obtain it? Please answer this, together with your opinion of my writing, and oblige." Your writing is very good: you must not despond. You can keep books, copy, and do many things. Copying is procured by advertising, by application to law offices and such places through friends, or by personal application. But a clerkship with a steady, reliable income, however small, is better than the rather precarious rewards of copying, unless you have regular employment.

SAWYER (St. Joseph, Mo.) says: "We are in a dispute about who was the first king of Ireland, and concluded to leave it to you. Please inform us through your paper as soon as convenient." When the English took possession of Ireland, it had several kings, as appears from the dealings with the "King of Linster," and was so probably as far back as history goes, though Brian Borumha is mentioned as monarch of Ireland in 1014. Before this time each province had its king, and it is said that there was one central ruler called Ardrigh, who reigned at Tara, and had a central territory—a sort of "District of Columbia," now called Meath. But we know little of these rulers.

CHARTER OAK (Fort Station, Tenn.) as far as we can make out, asks as follows: "After a lengthy discussion on one question, we propose to submit the decision of the same to you: Whether this is the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The discussion originated from your reply to your correspondent from Huntsville, Alabama, in your last number. Please answer in your next number." This is considered the nineteenth century by all enlightened persons in these parts, and the same has been more than once stated in terms in the leading newspapers and in public speeches.

SIMPLE (Scotia, N. Y.) says: "Some of the higher institutions of learning are called colleges, and others universities. Will you please inform me in your Notices to Correspondents if the difference is merely in name, and if not, in what respect they differ?" No special simplicity is implied in ignorance of what is hardly *knowable*. A university, properly speaking, trains for all professions; and is a group of colleges. But the most high-sounding name appears to be selected in our time without strict regard to the historical meaning of words.

YELK AND WILLIAM (Quincy, Ill.) say: "Will you be kind enough to favor us with an answer to this question in the next issue of your valuable paper, and oblige? What is the population of London, and what is the population and name of the largest city in China?" The population of London may be roughly stated at three millions and a quarter, and according to the most reliable information within reach, Pekin has a population estimated at about two millions.

T. S. H. sends us the following remedy for cracked hands. He says: "I discovered a remedy in my own case, some years since. I discontinued the use of soap, and the cure was perfect. As the remedy costs nothing, and is so easily tried, I hope you will give your readers the benefit of it. The hands can be kept clean without the use of soap, by using warm soft water, and taking a little more time in washing them."

HEBER (Ashtabula, O.) asks: "Have you the back numbers of the *Ledger* containing the story of 'Mark Heber's Luck; or, Life on the Plains,' from June first to the end of the story? I failed to get them at that time, and I would like them. Please answer in your next number." We have the numbers. They will cost one dollar and twenty cents.

G. W. S. (Wilmington) wishes us to "give a true definition of courtship." It is the act of wooing in love. It is an old adage, that "practice makes perfect;" and if you want a thorough understanding of what it is, just try it. You will find it the pleasantest ship you ever sailed in, and one which, properly guided, will carry you to a delightful home.

L. B. says: "Please allow me to trespass upon your attention for a few moments, as I am greatly in want of an impartial adviser. My case is this: I am a country girl, eighteen years of age; parents both dead; am living with my bachelor brother, keeping house for him. I am in love, and have been engaged for two years, with my brother's full consent. We were to be married in a short time, but not long ago my brother forbid my marriage. He insulted my lover, and told me that I had to stay and keep house for him; also that I would be committing a sin to marry my second cousin, and called him many wicked names. We have a large house and several hired men all the time, and I have all of the housework to do by myself. My health is failing very fast, in consequence of overwork. I have repeatedly asked my brother to hire help for the house, as he is in good circumstances; but he won't listen to a word I say. My lover has discovered the bad state of my health, and is very uneasy about me, and wants me to marry him, even against my brother's wishes. Now a word about my lover: He is not rich, but he is in good circumstances; is highly respected by all who know him; is strictly temperate, and does not use profane language. Now please answer me a few questions, and then I am done. Is it a sin for second cousins to marry? Would I do right to marry against my brother's wishes?" It is not a sin for second cousins to marry, if they love one another truly and all the circumstances are proper. If you have stated your case correctly, you would certainly be justified in marrying as soon as you please, without your brother's consent. He has no right to ruin your health and blight your whole life to gratify his parsimonious and avaricious spirit.

A MOTHER says: "Will you please advise me in a little domestic matter, which may seem small, and yet be productive of large results. I have three sons; they are quite young; and the two eldest—seventeen and nineteen—go out evenings either to dancing-school or soirees, but, I am glad to say, to no wrong place; only they go out. Now what I want to know is this: How can I induce my youngest—twelve years—to amuse himself at home? Of course I can use my authority, but I would rather have some strong attraction, so that when he gets beyond restraint, the habit will be so strong as to influence his future life. You may say games, books, etc. He has all these; but I hope you will suggest something new beyond all my planning. Please give me an early reply, and oblige a reader of the *Ledger* for twenty years." Your third boy is at some disadvantage, having the example of his seniors before him. Is it the right relation of parent and child that the former must *amuse* the latter, or have him go out? According to our ideas of things, a boy of twelve should have his lessons to learn, and work enough of that kind to employ his evenings, except for those occasional and proper amusements which it is unwise to deny where they can be enjoyed consistently with the sober duties of life. But the too common idea that parents must find amusements for their youngsters, or be reconciled to their going out for it, is a mistake, and is working incalculable mischief.

ANXIOUS SON D. C. E. (Chicago) says: "I have been taking the *Ledger* for some time, and have noticed that you take considerable interest in answering letters of inquiry from different parties; therefore, if it is in your power to give me assistance on this subject, please do so, and you will oblige me very much. The facts are these: I was born in Logansport, Ind., and my mother became insane at my birth, and my father placed her in the State Insane Asylum at Indianapolis. When I was three months old my mother died, and I was adopted by the matron, who afterward married and moved away from there, and kept moving around from one city to another, she having married an itinerant minister. And until I became of age I was kept ignorant of my history, she not deeming it necessary to inform me. I know my father's last name, but not his Christian name. I also know my mother's name before she married. Now what steps should I take to find what became of my father? Please answer this in the correspondents' column, and oblige an old reader. Please answer as soon as possible. I would give almost anything to find my father." A visit to Logansport, or a correspondence with some one resident there for a long time, or an advertisement in the newspapers, or possibly this inquiry in the *Ledger*, may procure you a clue which you could follow up.

SCHOOL-BOYS IN TEXAS write: "Will you be so kind as to answer the following questions in your Notices to Correspondents? Who is it, living at No. —, Nassau street, New York city, calling himself ——? How does he go on with such wholesale robbing, as writing letters to school-boys persuading them to buy counterfeit money, and not be arrested? I have received, and several of my schoolmates have received these letters, and he tells us we have been recommended to him by one of his friends, and that he has great confidence in us, etc. I presume he means to say that we have been recommended as thieves. Now, how does he find out our names and post-office? Some boys he has written to were never fifty miles from home, and did not think their names were ever called out of their native State, when lo! they receive letters from New York counterfeiters! Can you explain this for us?" The probability is that the villains in New York who are trying to tempt you to ruin, got your names and addresses out of some school catalogue. Or it may be that they have employed some one in your village to send them names of boys living there. Pay no attention to their offers, and do not enter into correspondence with them at all.

E. D. A. writes: "I am a widow, thirty-four years old. A young man, twenty-one years of age, has fallen in love with me, and I love him very dearly. He wishes me to become his wife, and I would gladly do so were it not for the difference in our ages. I fear that such a marriage would bring anything but happiness to him; I should wish to be most happy. We are both poor in this world's goods, but my lover is an industrious young man. I am young looking for my age, and am called pretty. I know we love each other truly, and think we are well suited for each other, excepting in regard to age. Please do not throw this aside unanswered, for we have agreed to let you decide whether we shall get married or not. We shall be much obliged for an early answer." We have not the heart to forbid the bans, merely for a difference of thirteen years in your ages. You can be not only a wife, but also a mother to the young man, and train him up in the way he should go, and take care of his earnings, and provide him a nice, cozy home, and make a man of him.

IGNORANCE (Baltimore) says: "I desire knowledge and information generally. Will you be good enough to advise me in the next number of your most valuable paper? I can write fairly, am very correct at figures and a good speller, and have had some fifteen years experience in business. I have made up my mind to follow whatever advice you choose to give. I would go to some friend, but am ashamed to do so, and that is also one of my principal reasons for not attending some night school or college. Tell me what to do, and please name books, and greatly oblige." Procure an English Grammar, and read it carefully. Keep a good book near you for reading at leisure times, such as the History of America, say Patton's. Then proceed to Bancroft or Motley. Then procure a good book of travels, say Livingstone's, and master one thing at once. Each good book, like a good friend, will introduce you to others, as fast as you can use them; and finally, never be ashamed to ask questions, or own your ignorance.

ILIAN says: "Will you be so kind as to answer this question upon a point of etiquette? When a gentleman wishes to send a card to two young ladies, say a Miss Jones and a Miss Johnson, should he indorse it, 'Misses Jones and Johnson,' or 'Miss Jones and Miss Johnson?' Again, if there are two Misses Jones and one Miss Johnson, should he indorse his note, 'Misses Jones and Johnson;' or 'Misses Jones and Miss Johnson;' or 'Miss Jones, Miss Anna Jones and Miss Johnson?' An answer through your columns of Notices to Correspondents would be gratefully acknowledged." In the former of the cases the proper way is to leave two cards, one for each, and no indorsement is needed. They are given to the attendant for the ladies, and are presumed to be delivered. If he must indorse one card, we should prefer "Miss Jones and Miss Johnson." In the latter case we should prefer the last of the three methods. But pasteboard is distributed very freely.

C. F. S. (Parker's Landing, Penn.) says: "Please settle the question, through the columns of your valuable paper, which of the two following forms of expression is grammatical—a ten-foot pole, or a ten-feet pole. I hold that the latter is strictly grammatical, according to the rule of false syntax which says, 'Where the numeral adjective is necessarily singular or plural, the word which it limits must be made to agree with it in number.'" You are mistaken as to the fact, and you misapply the rule which you quote. Would you say a four-horses team, or a four-horse team? Would you say a ten-dollars bill, or a ten-dollar bill? You will of course see that the singular form is the correct one. In speaking of the power of a steam engine, no one would think of saying it was an engine of forty-horses power, but everybody would say of forty-horse power. Ordinary common-sense and grammar agree in this respect.

BASSILL (Indiana) writes: "I am a young man; will be twenty-one soon. I am engaged to a young lady. As the matter now stands, we are to be married in about two years. I have a good situation, with moderate wages, and by practicing economy, I think I could live very well now. Our parents are perfectly willing. Now, do you think it policy for us to wait so long, although at the end of that time I may be better prepared to take care of a wife?" There are many risks and uncertainties attending long engagements, and if you are quite certain that you can practice so much economy as to continue to lay up something after you are married, we do not see any necessity of your waiting.

ADDIE (Rutland, Vt.) writes: "As you are so kind as to answer so many questions asked you, I am going to ask you one, and hope you will give me an early answer to it. I am seventeen years old. Do you think me too old to commence a term of music? I am a great lover of music, and have a voice that many friends have urged me to cultivate, but have never had a chance before. Now my parents think it is too late." It is not too late. By assiduous study and practice you can develop whatever musical talent you possess.

LILLIE (Alabama) asks: "How should a young lady act toward a young man whom she wishes to treat courteously, yet does not wish to receive his attention? For instance, if she attends a place of amusement with her brother, and he asks leave to accompany her home, what excuse should she render in order that he may not become offended?" She should decline politely, thus: "Thank you; I have the company of my brother."

A CONSTANT READER Rochester, N. Y.) says: "Please inform me through your paper if President Grant has the appointment of the Chairman of Foreign Affairs?" No. Each branch of Congress appoints the Chairman of its own Committee of Foreign Affairs.

AN INQUIRER asks: "In opening a correspondence with a lady, who should write first, and what should he say?" The gentleman should write first, and should say whatever he has to say. If he has nothing to say, he should not write.

J. G. B. wishes to know whether the true standard of the value of an article is what it will sell for. We believe that is regarded by political economists as the true standard, and we so consider it.

**** Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*